

**BEXLEY UNITED
REFORMED
CHURCH**



Valley of Rocks, Devon

**SPRING
MAY 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 19th May 2024

**BEXLEY URC CHURCH HALL
& RUXLEY ROOM**

Junction Bexley High Street and Hurst Road
Facilities include a Stage and a Fitted Kitchen
Reasonable rates include Heating and Lighting

Inquiries to: Letting Secretary 07702 185702
elliestocker@talktalk.net

Rodolphe Blanchard-Kowal
Minister's Pastoral Letter for May

Dear Friends,

We are now in the time after Easter. In May we celebrate the traditional festivals of Ascension, Pentecost and Trinity. These festivals mark the Christian year. They have an important meaning. Spread throughout the year, they teach us what the Christian life is all about. In the time leading up to Easter, Christians were concentrating on the ministry of Jesus and preparing for the events of the crucifixion and resurrection. Now that this has passed, another time is opening up: the time of the Spirit. This time is inaugurated by the Pentecost event, in which we see the disciples receive God's Spirit and open themselves up to all people.

We now need to make a distinction between all the stories that happened in Galilee and Jerusalem in the 1st century and our own history, that of a Church that was born a few years after the death-resurrection of Jesus according to the testimony of the Apostles, followed by several centuries of a complicated and eventful history, made up of the testimony of Christians in various historical contexts, to end up in our own time. All the stories of Jesus told in the Gospels and read every week in our churches have nourished our Christian imagination. We have seen Jesus leaning with compassion over thousands of Jews from Galilee, and even from other peoples. We have seen him heal people, lift up those excluded from the community, and free people possessed by evil powers. These stories move us. They are part of us, so much so that we look to Jesus with confidence, as the last resort when we are in trouble or suffering, because we have seen him take on the suffering of all who meet him.

As we enter the post-Easter period, Christian tradition tells us through the event of Pentecost that we have God's Spirit with us. The Spirit will defend us and help us. The Holy Spirit defends us by giving us the strength to resist the destructive powers of this world. The Spirit helps us by enabling us to put into practice in this present world the

will of God, which Jesus Christ came to tell us in a way that could not be more explicit, by the example of his life. Yes, with the Spirit of God, we give concrete expression to everything we have received from the Gospels. The image of Jesus Christ leaning with compassion towards a person in need is undoubtedly the most striking of all. It is this image that should inspire us in our daily lives. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we learn to discern in our daily lives what we should do, what services we should offer, how we should make ourselves available to others, what social evils we should fight against, and so on.

The tradition of the Church has attributed to this time of the Spirit the greater part of the Christian year (it extends from Pentecost to Advent), three quarters of the year. In a way, this shows that our faith is made up of a time of training (from Christmas to Easter) and a long time of practice inspired by the Spirit of God.

So I wish you a wonderful Pentecost, in the light and warmth of the flame of the Holy Spirit, and lots of inspiration throughout the year as the kingdom of God draws near.

Be blessed with every spiritual blessing!

Rev Rodolphe Blanchard-Kowal

The Christening

On Sunday 28th April we were delighted to welcome the family and friends of Jack and Holly Witt to celebrate the christening of their baby son Rory Leslie. Great Grandparents, Frank and May Kings, were members and friends of this church for many years and their children, Gareth, Neswyn and Helen, all had their names added to our Cradle Roll when they were christened as babies. We are so pleased to be able to add Rory's name to the Cradle Roll.

Services for May 2024 at 10.30am except when stated

	<u>Minister</u>	<u>Elder</u>
Sunday 5 th May	Rev Ian Gow	Philip
Sunday 12 th May	John Twidale	Ann
Sunday 19 th May	Martin Leonard	Mavis
	Communion	
Sunday 26 th May	John Johnstone	Philip

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 May are:-

Sunday 5 th May	Margaret Hunt (Salis), Stephanie & David Honey
Sunday 12 th May	Mavis Wilson, Tony & Ann Ball
Sunday 19 th May	Suzanne & Mike Whitnall, June Bobby
Sunday 26 th May	Keith Thomson, Angela Davis

Please also remember in your prayers – John Johnstone, Janet Roberts, the families of Rev Edward Young and Pam Collins and Christine Cornish.

Pause for Thought

Sunday 5 th May	Keith	Sunday 19 th May	Suzanne
Sunday 12 th May	Bee	Sunday 26 th May	Linda

Flowers for May

Sunday 5 th May	Margaret Hunt (Salis)
Sunday 12 th May	
Sunday 19 th May	Mavis
Sunday 26 th May	Dorothy

Letter from a Non-Serving Elder

The Pace of Change

I first came across artificial intelligence some months ago and wondered at its ability to perform so many tasks at speed. For instance, it could write an article suitable for a church magazine, if so commanded. Artificial intelligence brought home to me just how fast the world is changing.

Most people are wary of change, but in our modern world the pace of change seems to be accelerating. Our church has undergone considerable transformation since earlier days. Many of these were brought about by the Regeneration Committee, which began its work in 2007. Alas, only two of that group are still with us. Peter Linder, who was an associate member, continues to serve the church. He was responsible for installing the facilities at the back of the church, which are essential for morning coffees, afternoon teas and monthly concerts. Thankfully, all our outreach activities are still thriving. Mavis Wilson is our Impresario, who manages to attract a variety of entertainers each month for the Sunday afternoon concerts. My personal favourite, several years ago was a young virtuoso of the classical guitar, who was still at Music College. Latterly, it has been Chicory Tip, who recently entertained us and inspired several members of the audience to dance at the rear of the church. They are at the other end of their careers, but still give great value as performers, with the audience enjoying all the tunes from their younger years.

Our church has seen other physical changes. There was once objection to the removal of several pews. Also some disquiet was expressed about the serving of coffee in the main church and the use of the sanctuary for Sunday Concerts. It seems that the use of the pulpit for the delivery of a sermon is now out of fashion, as is the attendance at church each Sunday. The latter is the result of changes in society, where there are now so many opportunities available for people to spend during their Sundays.

When I took a glance recently at the book of photographs recording the work of the Regeneration Committee, I was astonished by the number of participants who are no longer part of our church community. It certainly brought home to me the pace of change just within our own local church family!

John Johnstone

The Reverend Edward Young

Many people in the congregation will have been sad to hear of the recent death of Edward Young, who was a regular visiting preacher to our church. Edward was usually accompanied by his wife, Dorothy, and they often remarked how much they liked visiting Bexley URC, because of its welcoming atmosphere.

I first met Edward when we both served as Directors/Trustees of a Mental Health Charity in Bromley. The charity had been set up to provide houses for former inmates of an Asylum. Government policy had changed and only those considered dangerous were to be confined. The others were to be integrated back into society and encouraged with the help of staff, to take their medicines regularly and to do normal things like visiting shops and cinemas.

It was interesting that both the Chairman of the Charity and Edward became ordained, the former in the Church of England and Edward as a Non-Conformist. Both men wished to contribute to the wider society in another way. When our church was looking for visiting preachers I was glad to recommend Edward.

John Johnstone

SOCIAL

SATURDAY 11th MAY
7.00pm – 9.30pm

Tickets: £8.00
Incl. Buffet
Supper

Tickets are available
from Social Committee

PLANT & TABLE TOP SALE

SATURDAY 18th MAY
10.00am – 12noon

Free Admission

Light Refreshments

SUNDAY AFTERNOON CONCERT

SWEET HAMONY
In Aid of Christian Aid

SUNDAY 19th MAY
3.00pm – 4.30pm

All Welcome



Dartford and Gravesham
NHS Trust

Darent Valley Hospital
Darenth Wood Road
Dartford
Kent DA2 8DA

Direct Line Tel: 01322 42****
Email: *****@*****
Website: www.dgt.nhs.uk

Date: 26th March 2024

Name: Rev. Blanchard-Kowal
Address: 500 Hurst Road
Bexley
Kent
DA5 3JN

Dear Rev Blanchard-Kowal,

We appreciate the eggs that were donated to us here at Darent valley willow ward. The smiles on the the childrens faces as we gave out the Easter Eggs.
Our love and appreciation to the youngsters.

Thank you so much

Yours sincerely,

Willow Ward
Darent valley Hospital

Chair: Dr Jackie Craissati

Chief Executive: Jonathan Wade



Our values



Care with
Compassion



Respect
& Dignity



Striving
to Excel



Professional
Standards



Working
Together



A City & Guilds Group Collaboration



Printed on recycled papers made from 100% reclaimed paper supporting the delivery of 'Net Zero' National Health Service

Neonatal Unit
QEH.
Woolwich.

Thank you so very much for
the beautiful knitting.

It is very much appreciated
by our families with babies
in our care.

Kind regards,

Sister Teri Stimpson.

Easter Flowers



The Guides saw the plea for flowers in the magazine and kindly made this Easter decoration for the church. It brought a smile to my face.

Kathy

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 22nd May 2024

(15 places available)

Cost - £10.00 (All materials will be supplied)

To book a place contact Penny –
duckhousecrafting@gmail.com 07415 138284

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

Christian Aid Week 2024 is 12th to 18th May. This year Christian Aid Week will focus on the cost of living crisis faced by many people around the world.

Prayer for Christian Aid *by Jonathan Clarke, from Christian Aid*

God of the oppressed, let justice flow like a river.

God of compassion, let dignity be extended to those who suffer.

God of the marginalised, let those living with discrimination come to know equality.

God of comfort, may every heart know your love and grace.

We pray that your purposes for Christian Aid would be accomplished.

May those caught in the grip of poverty and injustice be met with dignity, equality, justice and love.

Strengthen and guide Christian Aid, its partners and sponsoring churches in all their work. Give them wisdom, perseverance for the task at hand, and a heart of compassion for all those that they work with. Empower them by your Spirit to bring your hope to this world that you love. Amen



'Commitment for Life' is the global mission support and advocacy group within the United Reformed Church in Great Britain.

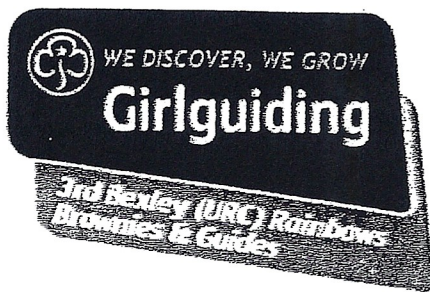
Creator God,
you pour your love persistently into all creation,
making the earth fruitful and life joyful.
We rejoice in your commitment to humanity,
your giving of breath and bodies,
of creatures and climate,
of beauty and love and hope.

God in Jesus,
you walk boldly and comfortingly alongside us.
We rejoice in your saving love,
in your overflowing and generous grace,
and in your love for all peoples.

God in Spirit,
you call us into unity with others.
We rejoice as you blow upon cities and villages,
fields and mountains,
warming communities around the world,
empowering God's people
to overcome self and to love radically.

Thank you for Commitment for Life,
a light shining in the darkness of our world,
which through our gifts, extends your life-giving embrace around the world.
We pray for our Commitment for Life global partners
in Bangladesh, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and Zimbabwe.
Open our ears and hearts to their voices
May our commitment be deepened and our lives renewed. Amen

(from Worship Words)



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

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.