

**BEXLEY UNITED  
REFORMED  
CHURCH**



**AUTUMN  
OCTOBER 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 20<sup>th</sup> October 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](mailto:elliestocker@talktalk.net)

## The Minister's Pastoral Letter for October

Dear Friends,

Last month, Sunday after Sunday, we prayed and meditated on the theme of caring for creation. It was the Season of Creation, a time in the Christian year dedicated to environmental issues, but also and above all a time to give thanks to God for the environment we have been given to flourish.

During the Season of Creation, some members of our Pastorate expressed the fact that we could do more in our churches for recycling. Now that the recycling industry is up and running across the country, it's sad to see the bins in our churches filled indiscriminately, mixing what can be recycled with what cannot. We all remember the images from documentaries of news reports of unrecycled British rubbish being exported to poor countries in Africa and Asia. We have also become aware that the accumulation of plastic in rivers and oceans has generated a huge floating mass of plastic in the Pacific Ocean. Turtles, which feed on jellyfish, mistake them for plastic bags. They choke and die. The environmental damage is heartbreaking. So instead of mourning this situation, which seems so massive and uncontrollable, we choose to do something, a small gesture in our daily lives, to oppose these huge movements of waste. It's a healthy response that comes from Christian hope. Christian hope is linked to a fight for justice, for the weak and the oppressed. Behind it is the image of Christ who bends down to the sick, the marginalized, the oppressed, to heal them, to reintegrate them to lift them up.

Recycling is one of the things we can do to alleviate the ecological crisis, along with many others: reducing our consumption of meat and animal products to preserve animal lives; limiting our use of oil, fuel and transport where we can; these are the main causes of greenhouse gas emissions worldwide. We can make a gesture by replacing animal products with more vegetables, seeds and legumes in

our diet, by avoiding food waste, by avoiding private cars in favour of public transport, cycling and walking if we can. However, even if we do all this – which is already great – as Western individuals we will still be over-consuming fossil fuels. It's up to the government to do the rest. We need to vote for more aggressive environmental policies than we have had in the past.

So as Christians we say yes to small gestures like recycling that make a difference on a large scale, but we also say yes to big gestures that act on a national scale: courageous, bold and unpopular government policies that we can embrace and support through our faith in Christ.

I hope you all enjoy the beauty of the autumn season.

With every blessing,

Rodolphe

Rev. Rodolphe Blanchard-Kowal  
Minister of Bexley URC, Emmanuel United Church Sidcup  
& Geddes Place URC

### **Church Flowers**

If you would like to provide flowers for our Sunday morning services, the Flower Calendar for 2025 is now available at the back of the Church. Please write your name against any dates you would like to chose to remember a birthday, anniversary or loved one etc.

The flowers can be arranged for you or if you wish you could arrange them yourself or have a little help and support whilst you do them. Money for the flowers is not required until the day you have selected.

After the Sunday service the flowers are distributed to those who are not well or who are housebound, they bring a lot of pleasure to these people who know they are not forgotten and are held in our prayers.

**Services for October 2024 at 10.30am except when stated**

	<b><u>Minister</u></b>	<b><u>Elder</u></b>
Sunday 6 <sup>th</sup> October	Rev. Rodolphe	
Harvest Festival	Blanchard-Kowal	Keith
Parade Service		
Sunday 13 <sup>th</sup> October	Valerie Loader	
Sunday 20 <sup>th</sup> October	Rev. Ian Gow	Tony
	Communion	
Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup> October	Rev. Rodolphe	
	Blanchard-Kowal	Ann

**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 October are-

Sunday 6 <sup>th</sup>	Kathy Shaw, Elizabeth Whorlow
Sunday 13 <sup>th</sup>	Philip Shepherd, Mike Adams
Sunday 20 <sup>th</sup>	Francis Christou, Sue Clark
Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup>	Christine Cornish, Pam Collins, Suzanne and Mike Whitnall

Please also remember in your prayers – Edward and Essie Boateng, Lorraine Gow, Jan Kienlen.

**Pause for Thought**

Sunday 6 <sup>th</sup>	Parade	Sunday 20 <sup>th</sup>	Essie
Sunday 13 <sup>th</sup>	Kathy	Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup>	Linda

**Flowers for October**

Sunday 6 <sup>th</sup>	Harvest	Sunday 20 <sup>th</sup>	Patricia
Sunday 13 <sup>th</sup>	Margaret(FCL)	Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup>	Keith

**SUNDAY AFTERNOON CONCERT**

**SUNDAY 13<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER**

**3.00pm – 4.30pm**

**SEVAN HABIB**

**Sings for You**

**All Welcome**

**QUIZ NIGHT**

**SATURDAY 19<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER**

**7.00pm – 9.30pm**

**Tickets: £8.00  
Incl. Supper  
Sausage and Chips**

**Tickets are available  
from Social Committee**

**AUTUMN FAYRE**

**SATURDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> NOVEMBER**

**10.00am – 12noon**

**Free Admission**

**Light Refreshments**

## Letter from a serving Elder

### **Stop abusing God**

Today an article on the news was about the abuse public facing workers encounter. That we should personalise the staff, imagine if it was our children working or other family members how would we feel about how they are being treated by the public, on the end of our frustration.

I have a confession that when a self service check out did not register a reduced price label, I wanted to alert the shop that the system was not working properly. I now feel guilty I could have been too assertive towards the staff.

Well, it is the same with God. If God was a family member how would we feel about God being ignored, abused by only being called upon to get us out of trouble, then forgotten, being blamed for disasters that could have been avoided, e.g. not living in an earthquake zone or floodplain. Aircraft maintenance or building regulations being short cut or inspection reports not being acted on.

God who loves us beyond our understanding, is not a hammer only to be used when things need fixing, God wants to share every part of our lives so we can learn, improve, and enjoy our lives better,

We pray in the Lord's prayer 'Your kingdom come.' why? Because imagine the world following God's rules described by Jesus.

Tony Ball

### **A prayer from a service prepared jointly by Christian Aid and Embrace the Middle East**

O God of all justice and peace, we cry out to you in the midst of the pain and trauma of violence and fear which prevails in the Holy Land.

Be with those who need you in these days of suffering; we pray for people of all faiths - Jews, Muslims and Christians and for all people of the land.

While we pray to you, O Lord, for an end to violence and the establishment of peace, we also call for you to bring justice and equity to the peoples.

Guide us into your kingdom, where all people are treated with dignity and honour as your children, for to all of us you are our Heavenly Father. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

*The Very Revd Canon Richard Sewell, Dean of St George's College Jerusalem.*

## Why do People Stop Going to Church?

I think we have heard all the old arguments in answer to the above question. They usually revolve around more weekend attractions, busy lives, more interesting things to do and boring services with, out-of-date music etc. However, I believe the answer is more fundamental. Could it be that an increasing number of people no longer believe in God?

If questioned why they no longer believe, they will cite the absence of God in such disasters as the Grenfell Tower fire. The failure of God to intervene in the wars taking place in Gaza, Ukraine and Sudan. I have also heard as an answer, that God allowed his 'chosen people' to be slaughtered in the holocaust. It is also easy for people to become disillusioned when confronted by a major illness and a feeling that God doesn't answer their prayers.

I do not discount the affect of the prominent atheist authors, Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens whose books have sold in their millions. It doesn't help that both authors were well versed in scripture. Who can quantify the extent of these two influencers on former believers?

While Christianity might appear to be in decline, the opposite seems to be the case with Islam. You may wonder why I refer to another religion, but there are similarities in the two faiths. Both religions believe in one God. There is also belief in many prophets, but one message. Both make reference to the Day of Judgement. Islam is more disciplined than Christianity, it requires its followers to pray five times a day and follow the strictures of Ramadan with its fasting from sunrise to sunset. To some critics Christianity would appear somewhat woolly compared with the apparent certainty and discipline of Islam.

So, how does the church at large answer these searching questions in a way that still make the existence of God relevant? It is easy for me to pose the question to which I have no immediate answers. However,



I did admire the answer of a Catholic priest to Margaret Margolyes in a recent television programme. She said she no longer believed in God – ‘Tell me about this God you do not believe in’, replied the priest. It may be the right response for the beginning of a valuable dialogue.

John Johnstone

### **Wanted for Exercise Classes**

We are very short of suitable weights to loan to our new members at the classes until they buy their own. If you originally came to exercise classes and still have your weights tucked away in the bottom of your cupboard and do not now use them would you consider donating them to us? We would be very grateful. Thank you.

Do speak to Mavis or Ann if you think you can help.



HELPING LOCAL PEOPLE IN CRISIS

## Harvest Thanksgiving Service - Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> October at 10.30am

This Harvest Thanksgiving we are supporting the work of **Bexley Foodbank** which has centres across the borough.

Bexley foodbank **URGENTLY NEED** :

**Baked Beans**  
**Tinned Tomatoes**  
**Jars of Pasta Sauce**  
**Tinned vegetables (Peas, Sweetcorn & Carrots only)**  
**Tinned Meat**  
**Tinned Fish**  
**Tinned Fruit**  
**Tinned Custard & Rice Pudding**  
**Jam, Honey, Peanut Butter and Chocolate Spread**  
**Dry Noodles**  
**Rice**  
**Biscuits**  
**Chocolate, Sweets & Crisps**  
**Long life Milk**  
**Long life Juice**  
**Squash**  
**Tea, Coffee & Hot Chocolate**  
**Deodorant**  
**Shampoo, Hair Conditioners and Shower Gel**  
**Bars of soap**  
**Toothbrushes and Toothpaste**  
**Laundry Powder and Capsules**  
**Washing up Liquid**  
**Sugar**

**Carrier Bags and Shoppers are super useful too!**

**We have a large amount of Pasta and Breakfast Cereal at the moment.**

Cash donations may be made by cheque payable to “**Avery Hill Charitable Trust**” and sent to the Treasurer, Avery Hill Charitable Trust, 7 Sandhurst Road, Sidcup, DA15 7HL. If you are able to **Gift Aid** your donation the Trust will receive an additional 25p for each £1 donated. **Gift Aid** forms are available at the back of the church.

**Crumbs — Sam Goodman, UK**

The famine in the land is over. It's time to go home.

The harvest is ready. It's time to reap.

The table is set. It's time to gather.

The banquet is served. It's time to eat.

The labourers are few. The harvest is ready

The need is still great. The hunger is still real.

We have gifts we could squander or talents we can offer.

The love is still waiting. So how does it feel

It is time to offer more than crumbs from the table.

It is time to share and reveal the Good News.

It is time to reach out wherever we are able.

It is time to respond how our God wants us to.

The field is ready. It's time for picking.

The courage is needed. There is much to share.

The losses still hurt, but it's time now for growing

It's time to put out hearts secure in God's care     *(from Worship Words)*

# Moving Stories

Commitment  
for **Life**

Committed to supporting our global partners **BANGLADESH**

## A Prayer

We choose a world of justice, where resources are not hoarded, but equally distributed; in which we work for a world made fit for future generations, caring for one another in peace.

**We choose, we choose God, for God is justice.**

We choose a world of peace, in which people no longer destroy one another, and all are respected for their uniqueness.

**We choose, we choose God, for God is peace.**

We choose a world of love, in which God's love for all is known, where each person is accepted and celebrated, through whom God's purpose for the world is fully revealed.

**We choose, we choose God, for God is love.**

We choose a world of joy, where the joy of God in all creation is fêted, where the goodness within all is gladly known.

**Where we join creation's song of praise.**

**We choose. We choose God. Amen.**

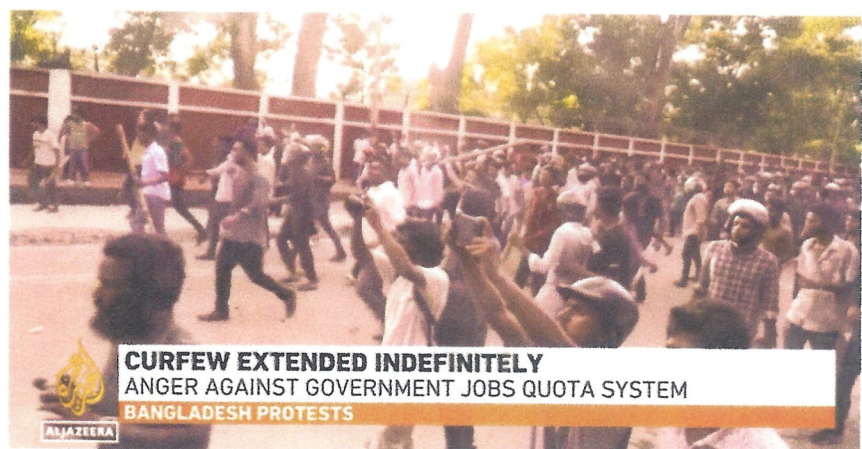


Photo credit: Al Jazeera

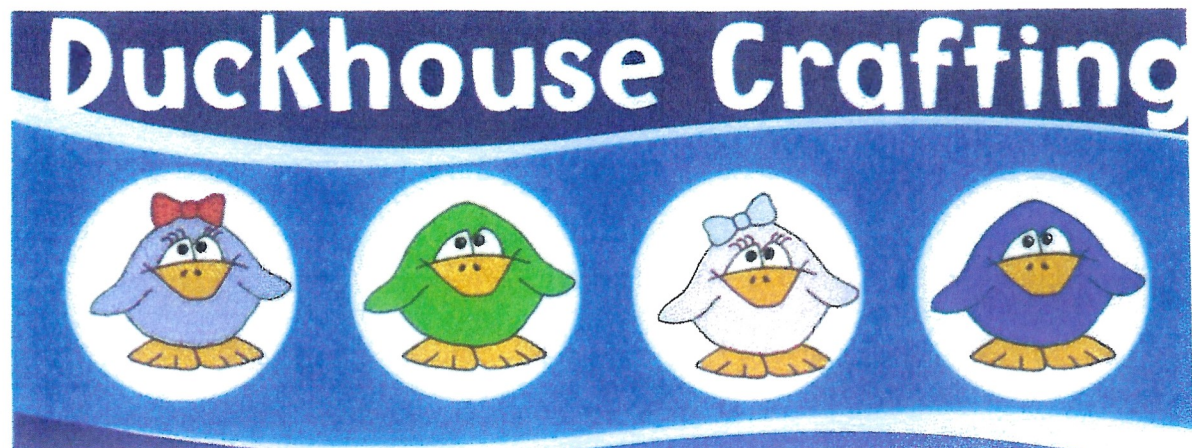
**B**angladesh has experienced unprecedented levels of student protest, possibly the worst in living memory. Over 100 people have died.

What started as peaceful protests on university campuses transformed into nationwide unrest. The government imposed a massive communications blackout, shutting down the internet and phone services.

University students were protesting a quota system for government jobs. A third of public sector jobs are reserved for the relatives of veterans from the war for independence in 1971. Students have argued that the system is discriminatory. Most people in the country agree.

It is vital that our partners can continue their work in support of some of the poorest people in Bangladesh. Please pray for the country and for our partners. For more information on these protests, see this Al Jazeera article:

[by Azizul](#)



## CRAFT WORKSHOP

This is a full day craft workshop from 10am until 4pm.

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

**Date:** - **Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> October**

**Cost:** - £15.00 (All materials will be supplied.)

We will be making 4 cards using different materials and techniques.

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-11.am(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, Darent – 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.