

**BEXLEY UNITED
REFORMED
CHURCH**



**SPRING
APRIL 2026**

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 April 2026

**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

Services for April 2026 at 10.30am except where stated

	<u>Minister</u>	<u>Elder</u>
Thursday 2 nd April (Maundy Thursday)	The Minister	
at Geddes Place at 7.30pm		
Good Friday 3 rd April	John Twidale	Mavis
5 th April	Easter Sunday Breakfast at Geddes Place at 8.30am	
Sunday 5 th April	Tony Ball	Mavis
	Holy Communion	
Sunday 12 th April	Rev. Ian Gow	Suzanne
Sunday 19 th April	John Twidale	Philip
	Holy Communion	
Sunday 26 th April	The Minister	Mavis

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.

Thank you. *Philip Shepherd*

Family News – on our prayer calendar for April are:-

Sunday 5 th April	John Johnstone, June & Don Bobby, Rodolphe & family
Sunday 12 th April	Kathy Shaw, Lucy & Chris Reynolds & Rosie
Sunday 19 th April	Debbie & Ian Markey & family, John & Bee Twidale
Sunday 26 th April	Peter Linder, Helen & Mike North

Please continue to remember in your prayers – Tony Ball, Eileen Hollingsworth, Peter Linder and Margaret Hunt (FCL)

Pause for Thought

Good Friday 3 rd April	Bee Twidale
Sunday 5 th April	Mavis Wilson
Sunday 12 th April	John Johnstone
Sunday 19 th April	Bee Twidale
Sunday 26 th April	Lynda Wells

Flowers for April

Sunday 5 th April	Easter
Sunday 12 th April	Keith
Sunday 19 th April	Christine
Sunday 26 th April	Ann

SUNDAY AFTERNOON CONCERT

**SUNDAY 12th APRIL
3.00pm – 4.30pm**

THE GREEN CABIN BAND

All are welcome

BOOK SALE

Come & Browse

**SATURDAY 18th APRIL
10.00am – 12noon**

In aid of Bexley & Greenwich Hospice

Light Refreshments

**CREAM TEA
IN AID OF
BEXLEY & GREENWICH HOSPICE**

**SUNDAY 19th APRIL
3.00pm – 4.30pm**

Suggested donation £5.00

**Come and enjoy the music and
fellowship**

Easter Eggs

Thank you to all the Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Leaders of our Uniformed Organisations and to members and friends who kindly donated a lovely assortment of 78 Easter Eggs which will be taken to the Children's Wards at Darenth Valley Hospital, Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Demelza House and Bexley Women's Aid to be given to children in hospital over Easter, and others in need.

Thank you again for your generosity.

The Minister's Pastoral Letter for April



Dear Friends,

Here we are in the season of celebrating Easter and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This Christian festival was once the most important of the year. Many baptisms took place at Easter. Some New Testament scholars even believe that the account of the Passion and Resurrection in the Gospel of Mark was the text used to accompany the newly baptised, in the time of the first Christians. Indeed, in this Gospel there is a mysterious naked young man:

“A certain young man was following him, wearing nothing but a linen cloth. They caught hold of him, but he left the linen cloth and ran off naked.” Mark 14:51-52.

Then, another young man is found at the empty tomb:

“As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side.” Mark 16:5.

Perhaps it is the same young man. He had to undress in order to step into the deep water of the baptismal pool, and then, he would emerge, as a newly baptised person, and be clothed in a white garment. He would represent all women and men waiting to be baptised in the church and witnessing the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus. I like this interpretation and I believe it is valid.

These days, there aren't many young people rushing to church at Easter to be baptised. It's not that Christianity is no longer relevant in our world. I think it is rather because we no longer know how to connect our Christian faith to the major problems of this world, from which people suffer and which they are powerless to resolve on their

own. We must be able to proclaim the resurrection in terms they understand and which resonate with their experiences.

The resurrection has many possible interpretations, and we are free to draw upon the Gospel accounts as well as ideas that are not stories but strong convictions, shaped by our experience of faith: it is possible to rise up from the forces of death in this world that have brought us down, both individually and collectively. I believe this is the essential message we must bring to all those who feel crushed, lost or desperate.

“Peace be with you!” (John 21:19), says Jesus, as he appears to his disciples on the day of his resurrection.

I wish you all a joyful Easter and hope you enjoy the beauty of nature as it comes back to life all around us!

Rev Rodolphe Blanchard-Kowal

A LETTER FROM NON-SERVING ELDER

“THE CHURCH”, OUR FAMILY

“WHERE ARE THE LAMPS”

Dear Friends

Essie and I have been members of Bexley United Reformed Church for almost 40 years, and have worshipped with 4 Ministers and Assistant Ministers. This Church is our home and the members are our family.

We have received nothing but love and support from members of this friendly Church. During this period, the Church has replaced some pews with cushioned chairs. The jar Mavis placed at the back of the Church for donation to the School for the Blind in Ghana, has been well supported and we are grateful.

During this period, our membership has been boosted by members from Welling URC, other sister churches and from the general public. Unfortunately, at the same time, we have lost very close friends or family through transfers and deaths. We missed them all, and for the departed, we continue to pray for their souls.

Now the question: “Where are the lamps?”. June Master Bacher’s contribution in “Women’s Devotional Bible (NIV) poses this question about a Church. In a certain mountain village in Europe several centuries ago, (so the story goes), a nobleman wondered what legacy to leave his town’s people. At last, he decided to build them a Church.

Nobody saw the complete plans until the Church was completed. When the people gathered, they marvelled at its beauty. However, the people noticed an incompleteness. “Where are the Lamps they asked, how will the Church be lighted?”. The nobleman smiled. Then he gave each family a lamp. “Each time you are here, the area in which you sit will be lighted. But when you are not here some parts of God’s house will be dark”

Sadly, through transfers, lack of Sunday school and sad departures of friends and families, the power of the Lamp is reduced. With the additional work being done to the Church Hall, I hope we can take some advice given by the late Bishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa in an article entitled, "Crying in the wilderness 1990"

1. The Church of God has to be salt and light of the world. We are the hope of hopeless through the power of God
2. We must transfigure a situation of brokenness and separation of fear and bitterness. We have no option; we are servants of God who reigns and cares"

Hopefully, with the additional work to the Church Hall, it will attract people into membership.

When I served on the Bexley Council as a Councillor, the 3 Councillors of Erith held regular monthly meetings with the Vicar of Christchurch. We met regularly because according to Bishop Tutu "where there are harshness and insensitivity, we must be compassionate and caring. Where people are statistics, we must show they count as being of immense value to God, where there is grasping and selfishness, we must be a sharing community now".

I pray for, and thank God for the lives of the team of volunteers, the Elders and all the others who have carried and cared for the Church despite difficulties.

It is with great sadness that I pray for the dear and loved departed ones. It is my hope and prayer that our Church will be supported and encouraged to light up with membership to carry the 'Lamps' and brighten the Church again.

Edward Boateng

Who Moved The Stone?

Either by chance or divine influence, I came across a book in the church bookcase, I had bought when I was in my early twenties. I must have read about the book in the papers but confess that I hardly scanned it. However, I quoted it in an essay I was writing years later. I referred to the writer, Frank Morison, setting out to write one book and finishing up writing something completely different.

Although I have heard the Easter story told many times, I have never really examined the facts or asked questions about them. So, I began as Morison did and read all versions of the story as they appear in the Gospels. Although they all tell the same story, they all differ and include different items of information.

Morrison's book concentrates on the last 36 hours of Jesus's life before his crucifixion and resurrection. It tries to answer several puzzling questions. At the last supper, Jesus told his disciples,

‘One of you will betray me- one who is eating with me’

The obvious question to ask is, did Jesus know what was going to happen? Why did he allow it to happen? He let Judas leave and even told him where he would be later that fateful Thursday evening. We know that Jesus prayed that he would be excused the torture of the crucifixion but in the end accepted that God's will would be done. Judas's role became necessary as on that late dark night in Gethsemane it was he who could identify Jesus, surrounded by his disciples and barely recognisable in the torchlight.

Why were the priests in such a hurry to get rid of Jesus? Well, if it was to be done it had to be done on the Friday before Passover. They couldn't arrest him in the Temple because his followers would have resisted the guards, hence the arrest by night. The priests knew that Jesus was an outstanding teacher, who healed the sick, but he was also a threat to the power of the priesthood. If he was indeed the Messiah, all their influence would disappear.

When Jesus was examined by the Chief Priests, it became clear there was not sufficient evidence for the death penalty. Witnesses claimed a) that Jesus had said he would destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days b) that he had said that he was the son of God. The last statement was regarded as blasphemy but even this was not sufficient for the Roman official to award the death penalty.

I believe Pilate may have had a raw deal from history. As a good Roman Official he would have to try the accused on the evidence, and it was very superficial. He clearly believed Jesus was innocent and did his best to free him. His wish was strengthened by a message from his wife;

‘Have nothing to do with that innocent man’

However, he had to give way to a baying crowd, especially when it was claimed that Jesus had said he was the King of the Jews, which was a threat to the stability of Roman rule and Pilate was forced to act when the crowd shouted that he was no friend of the emperor.

Without the crucifixion it is unlikely that Christianity would have spread so far and so fast. Indeed, the cross has been the clear symbol of our faith, and the resurrection is an essential component of our belief. As for who moved the stone? There is no definitive answer and maybe the question is largely irrelevant.

John Johnstone

Tangent thinking from 2am

I find when waking in the middle of the night , is a good time to read then go back to sleep. But, it is also when I think about things. Here are thoughts that started somewhere from reading Holy Habits, a book taken from the church library.

Miracles - My argument that they do happen.

God works through the laws of nature. It is a wonder our world exists against statistical probability. So I believe God has nudged, coerced, and pushed evolution to create us.

In addition, God is also able to work non-predictably using laws we have not discovered yet. This enables God to engineer nature to show us things we need to see at the right moment we need to see it.

So why do we need to pray?

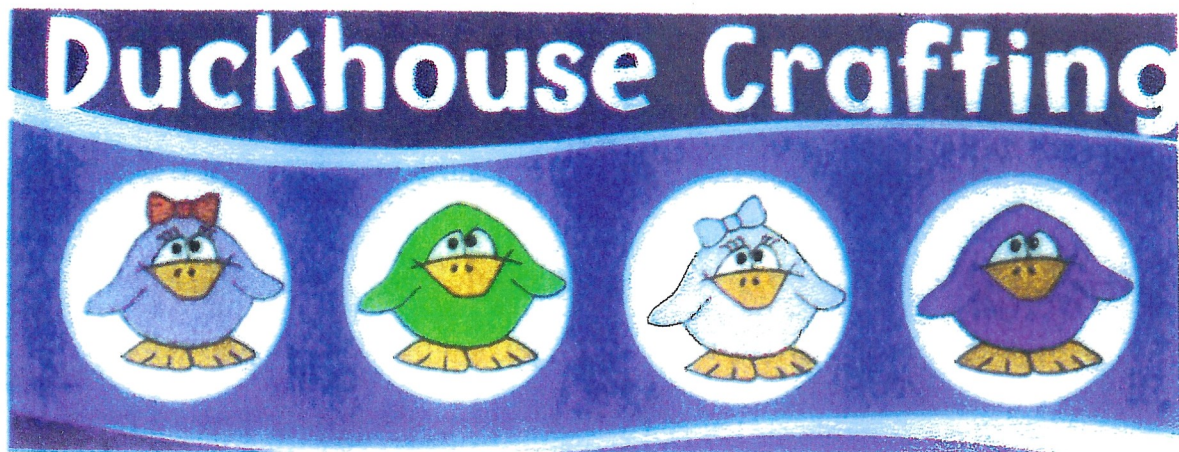
Prayer focuses our mind on our requests. God knows what we will ask for, and, when we will ask for it, and has prepared the answer from the start of time. This is our partnership for us and God and the world. Together when we do our part, miracles do happen.

When we stop praying and searching for answers, we are not doing our part and God is working with only the predictable laws of nature only.

Working in partnership with God is what we were made to do and enjoy our lives to the fullest, so, let's do our part in working with God.

Tony Ball

I welcome corrections to any of my thoughts, Correction is a win win , I am either right or I learn to be better. So I look forward to your comments



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 15th April 2026**

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 07415 138284

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



Opening Words for Worship in a Time of War by Revd Phil Nevard

Where rockets and missiles and bullets prevail

GOD IS NOT GLORIFIED

Where dust and smoke and teargas fill the air

GOD IS NOT GLORIFIED

Where food and medicine are denied and water is cut off

GOD IS NOT GLORIFIED

Where land is seized and walled off and others are excluded

GOD IS NOT GLORIFIED

Where soundbite slogans of support override decades of complex history

GOD IS NOT GLORIFIED

GOD IS GLORIFIED

Where stories are heard and difficult truths are shared

GOD IS GLORIFIED

Where land is fruitful and all can flourish

GOD IS GLORIFIED

Where streams of living water bring healing to all

GOD IS GLORIFIED

Where steadfast love and faithfulness meet; where righteousness and peace have kissed.

MAY GOD BE GLORIFIED

Submitted by Kathy

The joy of creation

As we look around us at the wonder of nature,

Lord, help us to see as you see,

and to recognise the fragility of life.

Give us eyes to see the beauty around us

and the hearts and arms to embrace your gift

and to treasure and nurture it for the good of all humankind.

Help us be aware that we all have a part to play

in sustaining our world and helping it flourish

for future generations.

Show us how the decisions we make day by day

might abuse or nurture our earth.

God of wonder, we pray as a people in awe of the

Continuous provision you offer us through the realm of nature.

We raise our prayers of thanksgiving to you,

our sustaining and life-giving God,

as we look to you to renew the earth and us to your glory. Amen

Peter Ball, URC Prayer Handbook 2025

Looking with Love by Sue McCoan, *Good Friday,*
URC Prayer Handbook 2025

We find it hard to look, dear Jesus,
at your bruised and bloodied face, your torn hands,
your broken body.

But you looked.
You knew this would happen – you told your
followers so –
 and still you came to the city,
 still you challenged the authorities,
 still you refused to run and hide.

You looked into the eyes of Judas,
you looked at the high priest, at Pilate,
at the soldiers who struck you,
at the ones who crucified you.
You looked at your mother, and the beloved disciple,
and you loved them all.

When we find it hard, dear Jesus, to look at
 the troubles of the world,
when we find it hard to confront our own sin,
show us how to keep our eyes open.
Help us not to flinch or turn away,
but to face life with courage
to act with compassion,
and to look with love on all we see.

Submitted by Kathy



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 2nd Tuesday 2pm-4pm (H)

Knit and Natter 3rd Tuesday 1pm-3pm (H)

Wednesday

Singing for Fun 1st and 4th 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

Girlguiding at Bexley URC

Rainbows

(for 4 to 7 year-olds)

Mondays, 4.30pm to 5.30pm

Brownies

(for 7 to 10 year-olds)

Mondays, 5.45pm to 7pm

Guides

(for 10 to 14 year-olds)

Wednesdays, 7.30pm to 9pm

Rangers

(for 14 to 18 year-olds)

Mondays, 7.30pm to 9pm

To register your daughter, visit
www.girlguiding.org.uk/joinus

To register as an adult volunteer, visit
www.girlguiding.org.uk/get-involved



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 details for Bexley residents :

Age UK Bexley – Services for older people
020 8300 0883 www.ageuk.org.uk/bexley

Alzheimer's Society – Dementia advice and support
01322 524950 www.alzheimers.org.uk

Bexley Accessible Transport Service – Telephone support & prescription pickup
01322 322333 www.bexleyct.co.uk

Bexley Carers' Support - Support for Carers
020 8302 8011 www.carerssupport.org

Bexley Council Contact Centre – 020 8303 7777 (Mon-Fri 8am-5pm)

Bexley Deaf Centre – support for deaf & hard of hearing residents
01322 351122 www.bexleydeafcentre.com

Bexley Mencap – Support for people with a learning disability & their families
020 8303 6336 www.bexleymencap.org.uk

Bexley Moorings – Befriending & virtual social group for ages 10-15
020 8304 9609 www.bexleymoorings.co.uk

Bexley Voice – Service for parent/carers of SEND children
07512 409936 (Thurs a.m.) www.bexleyvoice.org.uk

Bexley Women's Aid – Domestic abuse support for women
020 8301 1536 (Mon-Fri, 9.30am-12.30pm) www.bexleywomensaid.org.uk

CAP – debt advice
0800 3280006

Citizens Advice – Advice for legal, financial and housing issues
01322 517150 Mon-Fri 9.30am-3.30pm www.bexleycab.org.uk

Counselling Matters – low cost counselling
07498 377305 www.counsellingmattersbexley.org

Crimestoppers UK – 0800 555111

Darent Valley Hospital, Darenth - 01322 428100

Family Lives – support for parents with a child under 5 years experiencing challenges 07739 788120 www.familylives.org.uk

London Fire Brigade – general enquiries 020 8555 1200. Emergency 999

ManKind – domestic abuse helpline for men
01823 334244 weekdays 10am-4pm

Mental Health Crisis Line - 0800 330 8590

Metropolitan Police – general enquiries 101. Emergency only 999.

Mind in Bexley – Talking therapies and support for Mental Health
020 8303 8932 www.mindinbexley.org.uk

National Rail Enquiries – 03457 484950

Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Woolwich - 020 8836 6000

Queen Mary's Hospital, Sidcup – 020 83022678

Re-instate – Employment retention support
01322 438155 www.re-instate.co.uk

Samaritans freephone - 116 123