

BEXLEY UNITED REFORMED CHURCH



**SUMMER
AUGUST 2026**

50p

Minister:

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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 23rd August 2026

BEXLEY URC CHURCH HALL
& RUXLEY ROOM

Sadly our hall is not available
for hire while modernisation is taking
place

No: 266

Services for August 2026 at 10.30am except where stated

	<u>Minister</u>	<u>Elder</u>
Sunday 2 nd August	Rev Ian Gow	Mavis
Sunday 9 th August	Val Loader	Keith
Sunday 16 th August		Philip
	Holy Communion	
Sunday 23 rd August	John Twidale	Suzanne
Sunday 30 th August	Rev Ian Gow	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 August are:-

Sunday 2 nd August	Linda Wells, Eileen Hollingsworth
Sunday 9 th August	Stephanie and David Honey, Helen and Mike North
Sunday 16 th August	Pam Collins, Christine Cornish
Sunday 23 rd August	Keith Thomson, Michael Adams
Sunday 30 th August	Kathy Shaw, Margaret Hunt (Salsby)

Please continue to remember in your prayers – Val Howe, Elizabeth Whorlow and Helen North.

Pause for Thought

Sunday 2 nd August	Stephanie
Sunday 9 th August	Essie
Sunday 16 th August	Ann
Sunday 23 rd August	Bee
Sunday 30 th August	Linda

Flowers for August

Sunday 2 nd August	Mavis
Sunday 9 th August	Church
Sunday 16 th August	Christine
Sunday 23 rd August	Mavis
Sunday 30 th August	

SUNDAY AFTERNOON CONCERT

SUNDAY 2nd AUGUST

3.00pm – 4.30pm

CHICORY TIPS

All are welcome

Sunday Afternoon Concerts

Whilst the building work is being undertaken on the Church Hall, our monthly Sunday Afternoon Concerts between 3.00pm – 4.30pm will continue in the Church.

Our programmes of popular songs and music up to Christmas are as follows:-

Sunday 2 nd August	Chicory Tips
Sunday 20 th September	Mandy & Me
Sunday 25 th October	Carol Ann Wells - Pianist
Sunday November	To be arranged
Sunday 6 th December	Green Cabin Band

Sadly there will be no car parking facilities available on the Church site, but on Sundays it is permissible to park in the road and of course there are two Council Car Park;

1. Behind The George
2. Behind The King's Head in Thanet Road

but they have to be paid for, of course. The 229 and 269 buses stop quite near the Church.

I do hope you will continue to come along, we are always please to see you and your friends. *Mavis*

The Minister's Pastoral Letter **for August**

Dear Friends,

Through this message, I would like to say goodbye to everyone, and in particular to all those I have not seen since the news of my departure. It has all happened very quickly.

First and foremost, I would like to say a big thank you to each and every one of you for the warm welcome you gave me when I arrived in Bexley in July 2023. Thank you for your trust during these three years of ministry spent with you.

Right from the start of this ministry, we shared our concern about the challenges facing the churches in our time. Families and young couples are no longer present in the churches. The most faithful amongst us are in a state of readiness, present and ready to welcome visitors or those interested in joining our congregations.

Unfortunately, this does not happen often. We need to come up with new ideas and get involved in new activities, but we lack the energy. It is difficult to ask for more from those who already give so much, perhaps even too much. Significant cuts would need to be made to our programme of activities, so that we can refocus on a few relevant initiatives to reach new people, but doing so means shaking up established habits. This takes time and requires a great deal of patience.

In the meantime, we are still here, united, with our eyes fixed on the Lord Jesus Christ, the source of light and joy in our lives. He helps us to stand firm in the difficulties we face.

My ministry amongst you is coming to an end. We all have limited time, energy and power in our lives to positively influence the course of events.

The Bible speaks to us of the end in surprising terms. On the surface, the Book of Revelation speaks of the end of time, but if we read it carefully, it is about something else. The end is not the moment when life stops, when everything comes to a halt. In the Christian faith, the end is a vision of peace and freedom from suffering. Similarly, when we speak of Jesus' death, we immediately speak of his resurrection. Endings are also beginnings.

As my time with you draws to a close, I wish you every blessing as you begin a new chapter in your life as a church. As for me, I too am starting a new chapter, in a new country. I will continue to think of you and pray for you.

May God bless you all abundantly!

Rev Rodolphe Blanchard-Kowal

VICTORIA HOMES ALMSHOUSES

There is a vacancy in Victoria Homes Almshouses in Bourne Road Bexley. Applications are invited from persons resident in or with local connections to the Borough of Bexley. Accommodation comprises a bed-sitting room with kitchen and shower room and is suitable for one person living independently, with priority being given to the elderly. Anyone interested is asked to contact the Trustees c/o 47 Knoll Road, Bexley DA5 1AY or telephone 07795 956 115 -----

Letter from a Non-serving Elder

Declining Standards

Many of you will remember Mary Whitehouse, a lady from the West Midlands, who campaigned against the increasing amount of bad language on television. The media lampooned her to such an extent that she became a figure of fun. I was fortunate enough to see Mrs Whithouse, in action at a school prize- giving, when she made a speech. Her aim was clear enough, which was to make the BBC and other broadcasters hold high standards about the language used on air. I believe the general population at that time, probably agreed with her.

The situation now, is far worse, you would be fortunate to see a film or play on television without a warning about swearing. I have been in enough football dressing rooms and on building sites to have heard what is now described as industrial language. The trouble is, that it is now so widespread that quite often people are unaware how often they use the f word and that it might be offensive to some others.

I think there is other evidence that we are less polite to one another than was once the case. When did you last see a gentleman raise his hat to a lady (I know that men tend to wear baseball caps rather than a trilby} or even give up his seat for one? In what we now call a woke society, some ladies would be most offended if a man opened the door for them to proceed.

John Twidale wrote earlier about people not dressing for church; what we once called wearing your Sunday best. This does not worry me, so long as people come voluntarily to worship, I am sure they are acceptable to the Lord. The days when ladies were expected to wear a hat in church are long gone. I am sure my aunt, whom I used to accompany to church in Scotland, was as much interested in what hats were on show in the congregation as the content of the sermon!

In these days, when many are so engrossed with their mobile phones they have no time for conversation, it is no wonder that standards are in decline.

John Johnstone

Declining Standards

I am privileged to read the draft for our monthly Newsletter before Ann prints it, so I am taking advantage by making one or two comments before anyone else. (I do hope you will reply with your thoughts too – its an interesting topic to look at).

I would agree with John that standards have declined over the years and I suppose as we get older we notice these changes more than ever. Beach-wear is common everywhere now but thankfully we don't have to follow it, and as far as language is concerned many of us are thankful that we are deaf and don't have to hear it.

However, over the last few months I have had to use a three wheeled walking frame to help my balance, and I have found it very useful. I have also been surprised and pleased at the reaction of people of all ages on the streets, when I have been grateful for their support.

I find it difficult to get across roads with or without traffic lights in the time allocated and people have slowed down to accompany me over the last few steps. Going into shops with no automatic doors is a nightmare, but people have helped without being asked, even when they do not want to enter the shop themselves.

So yes, standards have declined but most people are helpful and kind, and we are blessed to live in areas where that is so. What do you think?

A comment over heard:-

A young man held a door open for a lady to pass by. Her only comment – “I could have opened the door myself”.

He replied

“Madam, I held the door open not because you are a lady, but because I am a gentleman!”

Navis.



Prayer for Trade Justice *by Rev Michael Harrison and Eleanor Harrison
OBE, Fairtrade Foundation*

Dear Lord, who prayed “give us today our daily bread”, we give thanks for those who work to produce our food and pray they may be given fair reward for their labours.

We pray for those who grow the things we love that can’t be grown in the UK, including our favourite cup of tea, coffee and bananas. We pray for communities where a fair price sends children to school and supports basic health care.

We pray that you will guide the fair trade movement in its efforts to secure a fair deal for those whose bargaining power is weakest.

We pray for supermarkets, brands and other retailers that they will recognise all the people involved in the produce they buy and the produce they sell, and that sustainable communities and a sustainable planet depend on fairness for everyone in our food supply chains.

We pray for shoppers here in the UK facing cost of living challenges, that they will recognise that fairness is for everyone.

When we come together socially and share a cuppa, in church, at parties or events, help us to remember to BREW IT FAIR. Amen

This URC Daily Devotion (9.7.26. *Eilidh Young, Bathgate URC*) struck a strong chord with me for various reasons and I decided to share it.

Ecclesiastes 3 : 1-11a

Everything that happens in this world happens at the time God chooses.

He sets the time for birth and the time for death,
the time for planting and the time for pulling up,
the time for killing and the time for healing,
the time for tearing down and the time for building.

He sets the time for sorrow and the time for joy,
the time for mourning and the time for dancing,
the time for making love and the time for not making love,
the time for kissing and the time for not kissing.

He sets the time for finding and the time for losing,
the time for saving and the time for throwing away,
the time for tearing and the time for mending,
the time for silence and the time for talk.

He sets the time for love and the time for hate,
The time for war and the time for peace.

What do we gain from all our work? I know the heavy burdens that God has laid on us. He has set the right time for everything. He has given us a desire to know the future, but never gives us the satisfaction of fully understanding what he does. All we can do is to be happy and do the best we can. All of us should enjoy what we have worked for. It is God's gift.

Prayer

Timeless One, we recognise that your plans can be very different from ours.

When we wait for your timing, we will benefit so much more because we place ourselves into your care. You know what is best for us, will provide for all we need, when it is needed. Forgive us for trying to force your hand and give us the confidence to trust in you, now and forever. Amen

Submitted by Kathy



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

Guides

(for 10 to 14 year-olds)

Wednesdays, 7.30pm to 9pm

Brownies

(for 7 to 10 year-olds)

Mondays, 5.45pm to 7pm

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

