

**BEXLEY UNITED
REFORMED
CHURCH**

**GOD HAS
PROMISED!**



RENEWAL OF PROMISES

**WINTER
FEBRUARY 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 15th February 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 February 2026 at 10.30am except where stated

	<u>Minister</u>	<u>Elder</u>
1 st February	Philip Shepherd	Mavis
8 th February	The Minister	Keith
15 th February	John Twidale	Philip
	Holy Communion	
22 nd February	Valerie Loader	Suzanne

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 February are:-

Sunday 1 st February	John Johnstone, Eileen Hollingsworth
Sunday 8 th February	Peter Linder, Francis Christou
Sunday 15 th February	Philip Shepherd, Michael Adams
Sunday 22 nd February	Helen + Mike North, Barbara Anderson

Please also continue to remember in your prayers –
Tony and Ann Ball

Pause for Thought

Sunday 1 st February	Mavis
Sunday 8 th February	Parade Service
Sunday 15 th February	Bee Twidale
Sunday 22 nd February	Linda Wells

Flowers for February

Sunday 1 st February	Ellie Stocker
Sunday 8 th February	Margaret Hunt (Salby)
Sunday 15 th February	
Sunday 22 nd February	Val Howe

SUNDAY AFTERNOON CONCERT

SUNDAY 8th FEBRUARY

3.00pm – 4.30pm

SWEET HARMONY

All are welcome

BINGO QUIZ

SATURDAY 21st FEBRUARY

7.00pm – 9.30pm

Tickets: £10.00

Incl: Supper

Tickets are available

from Social Committee

TABLE SALE

SATURDAY 7th MARCH

10.00am – 12 noon

Free Admission

Light Refreshments

The Minister's Pastoral Letter
For February



Dear Friends,

We are soon entering Lent, a special time in the Christian year when we take time to reflect on our faith and our relationship with our social and natural environment. It is also a time marked by waiting.

Just as Advent is the time of preparation for Christmas, Lent is the time when we prepare to proclaim the resurrection at Easter.

In the past, Christians used a word that has now fallen into disuse. They spoke of *penance*. This is no longer part of today's vocabulary, but the idea remains important. At the beginning of the Gospel, it is John who calls on the Jews to do penance. The original text of the Gospel uses a Greek word that we used to translate as penance, sometimes also as *conversion*, but which can be translated in a more daring way. It can also mean a *change of mentality*. It conveys the idea of opening oneself to something greater than oneself. Let us imagine that we open our hearts, our entire inner space, to confidently let in a light and warmth that does us good, fills us with love and unites us with all creation. We are projected far beyond our personal worries and anxieties. We are restored.

“Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished.” (Matthew 4:1-2).

This is undoubtedly the experience that the Spirit of God gives Jesus when he is sent into the desert for 40 days. He finds himself far from all the distractions created by the hustle and bustle of social life and the many temptations offered in communities. He finds himself alone, facing a void conducive to concentration. What he discovers

there is what is essential to satisfy all our needs – focusing solely on God’s commandment, being one with God.

You are welcome to join us for the Lent course ‘40 years in the wilderness’ which will be held from Tuesday 24th February to Tuesday 24th March at 10.00am in the church in Bexley URC, together with our friends from Churches Together in Old Bexley

Sisters and brothers, dear friends, I wish you a season rich in meditation, in the joy that comes from living a sober life focused on the essentials.

Rev Rodolphe Blanchard-Kowal

Abba Prayer – Rex A E Hunt, Australia

You are invited to pray in the spirit of The Lord’s Prayer

All Gracious Spirit,
Who loves us like a mother,
Whose realm is blooming among us now.
And within.

We pray that your compassion guide us in every action.
Give us what we need for each day,
and help us to be satisfied with the miracle of that alone.

Forgiver, whose embrace brings us to wholeness without our asking,
May we reconcile ourselves to one another in humility.
And may we cancel the crushing debts that imprison our neighbours
So that communities of joy and health may flourish.

May we neither profit from nor ignore evil.
But ever work to thwart it with non-violence
As we co-create the realm of peace in this world.
Now and each day.

From Worship Words submitted by Kathy

Count Your Blessings

Do you remember the old song, 'Count your blessings name them one by one'

I have listed 10 blessings for which we should be grateful

1. The flower arrangements at the front of the church.
2. The tea and coffee provided after the Service
3. The fact that a Preacher appears each Sunday
4. A church magazine appears each month
5. The church is kept on a sound financial footing
6. The outreach programme into the local community
7. The doors are open before the Service and the heating is on.
8. The Prayer Chain
9. The Elders
10. those who do Pause for Thought

I apologise if I have missed something out, but our church would not function quite so well without the voluntary activity of the above.

John Johnstone

Letter from an Elder

Dear Friends,

I was worshipping at another church a couple of weeks ago. There were about 50 people but I was the only man wearing a tie. This is not unusual these days, although not at Bexley where there are still a few of us.

What ever happened to “Sunday Best”? In my childhood it was my best, smartest and newest clothes on Sundays.

A few years ago, I was Interim Moderator at St Andrew’s, Brockley, one of Philip’s former haunts. They have an older group, mainly of Caribbean origin, who really dress up, especially the hats. I believe they see dressing up as part of the worship.

When Constance Coltman was ordained in 1916 there was a big debate about what she should wear on her head.

Certainly, in my youth, women always wore hats in church and men always took theirs off. I still feel uneasy seeing a man who has not uncovered in church although usually they do not intend to offend as they are unaware of the convention. On one of our recent Viking cruises in Eastern Europe we visited a church who had a steward at the door asking men to take them off. It was usually Americans in baseball caps.

On the other hand, it has never bothered me when I’ve had Jewish or Sikh friends in church.

I can remember my father wore a tie almost all the time at home, not just for work. Of course, work dress codes are more relaxed these days. Even MPs are no longer expected to wear a tie in the chamber. It was long ago that I would not go for a meal in a restaurant or a

friend's house nor wearing a suit and tie. These days it would not occur to me.

It must be more than 30 years ago when I was at Burnt Ash (now called Lee Green) a much respected elderly gent called Bob blew his top when a young teenage girl came out to do a reading wearing her best cloths but with a bare midriff. She thought she was the bee's knees and just did not understand she was causing any offence.

Again, at another church, we had a minister come to "preach with a view" wearing a suit, shirt and tie. We took this as a sign of his churchmanship. When we got to know him we realised he was totally disorganised and had probably just forgotten to pack his clerical gear.

How often do we get wound up over things that do not really matter? I would hate to have either a formal or informal dress code in our church but if I go somewhere as a visitor I would try to conform. I'm just going to continue as I normally do.

John Twidale

DONATION TO THE SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

Dear Friends

We are so grateful for your kindness and support. Your help and generosity mean so much to us and the School for the Blind at Akropong Akuapem, Ghana.

We are forever grateful for your donations. We are pleased to inform the Church that a donation of £250 (Two hundred and Fifty Pounds) from Bexley URC was presented to the School on 19th January 2026 by our relatives in Ghana. (Receipt for the presentation)

We thank you all for your contribution over the years, and we particularly thank Mavis and Keith for their help with this project.

Thank you

Edward and Essie Boateng