

**BEXLEY UNITED
REFORMED
CHURCH**



**SUMMER
JUNE 2025**

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 22 nd June 2025

<p>BEXLEY URC CHURCH HALL & RUXLEY ROOM</p> <p>Junction Bexley High Street and Hurst Road Facilities include a Stage and a Fitted Kitchen Reasonable rates include Heating and Lighting</p>

<p>Inquiries to: Letting Secretary 07702 185702 elliestocker@talktalk.net</p>

Services for June 2025 at 10.30am except where stated

	<u>Minister</u>	<u>Elder</u>
Sunday 1 st June	Philip Shepherd	Keith
Sunday 8 th June	John Twidale	Ann
Sunday 15 th June	Mavis Wilson	Philip
	Holy Communion	
Sunday 22 nd June	Val Loader	Keith
Sunday 29 th June	The Minister	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.

Philip Shepherd

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

Sunday 1 st June	John & Bee Twidale, Margaret Hunt(FCL) Mavis Wilson
Sunday 8 th June	Philip Shepherd, Peggy Simmonds
Sunday 15 th June	Penny & Colin Denyer and Family
Sunday 22 nd June	Pam Collins, Christine Cornish, Barbara Anderson
Sunday 29 th June	Francis Christou, Dorothy Down

Please also remember in your prayers – Barbara and John Johnstone, Ann and Tony Ball

Pause for Thought

Sunday 1 st June	Linda	Sunday 22 nd June	Kathy
Sunday 8 th June	Essie	Sunday 29 th June	Linda
Sunday 15 th June	Keith		

Flowers for June

Sunday 1 st June	Barbara	Sunday 22 nd June	Suzanne
Sunday 8 th June	Sandy	Sunday 29 th June	Michael
Sunday 15 th June	Tony		

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

Dear Friends,

After Pentecost, we enter the greatest period of the Christian year, the time of the Church. The story of Pentecost tells of the gift of the Spirit.

At Easter, we witnessed the resurrection of Jesus, and then his appearances among the disciples. There is something ambiguous and elusive about these appearances: Jesus is no longer there in the flesh, but he is nonetheless truly present. The disciples experience this presence. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper also reminds us, each time we celebrate it, of his presence as we share the bread, his body, and the wine, his blood. But how can we continue to be a disciple when the account in the Acts of the Apostles tells us that Jesus goes up into heaven in a cloud? It is at this point that the story of Pentecost helps us to move beyond the problem of the disappearance of Jesus.

The disciples receive the Spirit of God or Holy Spirit – it takes over when Jesus is no longer there in flesh with them. It is this inspirational force that helps them to make decisions, to act, to move wherever they receive the intuition to go. The Holy Spirit is the motivation of the disciples. For us who are the heirs and descendants of these disciples, the Holy Spirit is also our motivation.

Our Church life is still marked by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Our elders' meetings begin with a prayer invoking the Holy Spirit. We need to feel that Spirit flowing around us as we discuss and make decisions. If our ego took on too much importance in our interventions, then we would all feel that it was no longer the Holy Spirit who was inspiring us, but rather personal interests, contrary to the needs of Christian fellowship.

Our church meetings are also a place where the Holy Spirit should be present in everyone's mind. These meetings take place after a service, with the dynamic of Sunday prayers, hymns and spiritual reflections.

In our family and social life, it is also the Holy Spirit who should always inspire our words and decisions. If a word does not help someone to flourish, if it does not bless, if it does not announce grace or joy, then that word is not inspired by the Holy Spirit, and should not have been spoken. The Holy Spirit helps us to discern God's will. It's not always easy, but our experience as Christians helps us to do it better. God's will is always to favour life, friendship, service, care for the weakest, freeing others from what oppresses them.

It is this inspiration of the Holy Spirit along with the will of God and the life of Jesus recounted in the Gospels that should govern the life of our Church and of each one of us. All this cannot be confined to a few principles and traditions. It is a dynamic and a search that is never definitively acquired, but which must be renewed at every moment. We need to be creative. Our local churches have a future insofar as we know how to receive the inspiration of the Holy Spirit who makes us creative. This can only be done through prayer and thanks for the time that God gives us.

I wish you all a wonderful summer, filled with the creativity of the Holy Spirit.

Rev. Rodolphe Blanchard-Kowal



2025 Pastorate Away Day

Dear elders, members of the \Pastorate Meeting,

I hope you are all well. I am writing to inform you that the 2025 Pastorate Away Day will be held at Footscray Baptist Church on Saturday 7th June. It will start at 10.00am with refreshments at the church's breakfast club (provided by the local catering team). The meeting will begin at 10.30am in the Parlour and finish at around 12.30pm with sandwiches from our bags.

I'll be proposing the theme "Recommitting our Pastorate to Ecology and Going Beyond!"

I have booked the Parlour (a small church hall) from 10.00am until 2.00pm. The Breakfast Club will serve us coffee and tea and welcome our donations, while other people will have breakfast in the church hall. This will be an opportunity, for a short moment, to meet the Baptist elders and volunteers of this church, which has just inducted its new Minister, Richard Hall.

Rodolph

Catherine Gow – Race for Life

On Saturday 5th July Catherine is running a 5km mud obstacle course in Mote Park, Maidstone for Cancer Research UK in memory of her mother, Loraine and others who are currently fighting cancer.

Please see the link below.

<https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/page/catherines-race-for-life-3274687685>

Alternatively, Catherine is able to collect cash and send it with her form. For Gift Aid donations, she will need name, amount and first line of address.

Philip Shepherd

**GAMES YOU KNEW
AND LOVED**

SATURDAY 14th JUNE
7.00pm – 9.30pm

Tickets: £8.00

Incl. Supper

Ham Salad

Fruit Flan & Cream

Tickets are available

from Social Committee

SUNDAY AFTERNOON CONCERT

SUNDAY 22nd JUNE
3.00pm – 4.30pm

JOHN BOWERMAN & FRIENDS

All Welcome

A Prayer for Palestine by Ana Gobbledale, URC

Originally published in 'Together in Prayer: Palestine'

World Day of Prayer 2024

Allah, Eternal One, God of Christians, Jews and Muslims, Holy One in this place, in Palestine and in Israel, may our faith lead us to bear with all in love, despite differences in faith traditions. Strengthen us to stand with all who are being harmed, even to bear with the occupiers in love, speaking the truth in loving resistance, calling the oppressor back to their humanity. May the legacy of those who have died in the Palestinian occupation live on to nourish the earth from which will arise renewed strength to continue telling the story and demanding justice, like the branches of the olive tree, resisting the strong winds that threaten to erase the truth of Palestinian experience. May the voice of truth, your truth, speak bold and strong bringing hope. Amen

Letter from Non-Serving Elder

Carbon Monoxide Detector

Dear Friends

In this article, I am humbly drawing the attention of members to an important item which should be at all times in the house as a safety measure – Carbon Monoxide Detector.

We all protect our homes from damages, theft and other kinds of disasters. They are all important but I believe that the most important item needed is a carbon monoxide alarm.

Carbon monoxide is highly dangerous and can kill quickly without warning because you can't see it, hear it or smell it. It can cause headaches, nausea, dizziness, breathlessness, collapse or loss of consciousness. It is just like, what part of John 10:10 says "The thief comes only in order to steal and destroy".

On Saturday, 22nd March 2025, our carbon monoxide alarm suddenly started making intermittent noise. Usually, when the alarm goes off, the advice is for the individual to open the windows and doors, stay outside and contact their gas provider for help. We contacted the Gas Safety Engineer who arrived within a short period to disconnect our gas supply and boiler, as he was unable to determine whether the alarm sounded due to detection of carbon monoxide or fault in the equipment. He advised us to contact another branch of British Gas to check the premises and carry out further investigation. He supplied us with 2 fan heaters and an electric cooker to use until the gas supply was reconnected. Unfortunately, they could not send another engineer till the following day, Sunday 23rd March 2025 between 0800 to 1300 hours. Consequently, we could not attend the church service.

After thorough investigation, the engineer concluded that the battery level in the carbon monoxide case was very low, but there was no problem with the gas boiler. We immediately went to a hardware store and purchased a new detector costing just £40. By this article, I am bringing to the attention of friends this small detector which is very important in the house to save lives. We were lucky to have ours checked, received advice and acted upon it.

On 29th March 2025, a very good friend of ours, a medical doctor who heard about our case, sent me this message: "So sorry to hear about your heating problem in the house. We share the same story by chance. I haven't had heating in my house since last month due to Insurance engineers checking all sorts of things with no success. I finally installed a new boiler this Thursday" As I mentioned earlier, in our case, the problem lasted 24 hours, and even within that period, we were supplied with heating and cooking facilities until the problem was solved.

It is summer time and I appeal to all members and friends to stay safe and keep windows and doors open, leave the premises and summon for help immediately for their own safety when their carbon monoxide alarm goes off, and to renew the alarm's battery when necessary.

I wish everyone God's blessings and protection

Edward Boateng

VE Day – 80 – Concert



On Sunday afternoon 11th May we held a Thanksgiving and Celebration Concert for the 80th anniversary of VE Day 1945. Lead by our Minister we had a simple service of thanksgiving, and the congregation were invited to place a single fresh flower in one of two wreaths to be placed on the War Memorial opposite the Church. One wreath was for all those who gave their lives for our freedom in the services, the second wreath was to commemorate the lives of those folk who served on the home front and protected the citizens of this country throughout the war, such as firemen, police, ambulance drivers, medical staff, the WVS and Salvation Army always present with their canteens and cups of tea for those devastated by bombs or other disasters. The factory workers making munitions and others. All these essential workers who played their part and lost their lives in doing so.

When the wreaths were filled (and they looked beautiful) the traffic was held up whilst all those who wished to go over to the War Memorial had an opportunity to do so. Others preferred to watch from the church railings or remain in the church.

Following a prayer and blessing by Rodolphe everyone returned to the church for tea and celebration cake.

The afternoon concluded with everyone singing some Vera Lynn songs and patriotic songs with much flag waving and gusto, the music being provided by Doug Snow, which was much appreciated.

The afternoon closed with donations being made for the Royal British Legion which raised £328.70 thanks to the 80 people who attended.

Mavis

Many Ways to Worship

Even in the three churches in our Pastorate there are slight differences in the way we worship. This thought made me reflect on my own experience of worship over the years.

I have visited numerous cathedrals, where I have admired the architecture and the history but never had a feeling of reverence, possibly because of all the tourists talking and taking photographs. However, I felt a real aura amongst the ruins of Rievaulx Abbey in Yorkshire and Micklem Priory in Sussex.

My first memories of attending church relate to my time in Scotland during the war. I walked to St. Rules Presbyterian Church, hand in hand with my aunt. Once there I noticed all the ladies wore hats and the men were in their best suits. After the first hymn I went to Sunday School where I collected a religious picture for my little album and looked forward to the big occasion of the year; the Sunday School picnic, usually, held on a farm where we got a ride on a tractor.

My next memory on returning to Birmingham was going to a Sunday School in a Church of England but also on Sunday afternoon to an Elim Tabernacle, where the big attraction was that it showed slide shows or religious films. The teachers were very earnest.

As a teenager I used to attend the Evening Service at St Martins in the Birmingham city centre. After the service I sometimes stopped to hear the Rev. Donald Soper preaching from his soap box in the nearby Bull Ring. Many years later I heard the now Lord Soper, still preaching from his soap box at Hyde Park Corner.

Since that time, I have visited a High Church, complete with 'smells and bells', beautiful old country churches as well as churches in the USA, with gigantic car parks, where it seemed very few wanted to walk to church! I have also sat in a Roman Catholic Church in Spain, where a huge incense burner swung back and forth down the centre aisle, seemingly about to decapitate us all.

A visit to the 'Wee Frees' in Sydney, was a throw-back to my Scottish experience but without hymns. My only experience of non-Christian worship have been visits to Buddhist temples in Thailand with my Thai friends and a very memorable Buddhist service set in a clearing in a forest on top of a hill, where the preacher was the Abbott of the local monastery, who had a beautiful speaking voice. I did not understand a word but was struck by the reverence of the congregation and the musical chanting.

There are many places and ways to worship the Lord.

John Johnstone

INKJET CARTRIDGES

It was a nice surprise to find quite a number of inkjet cartridges in the box in the lobby recently. These have now been packed and sent off, and in due course we will receive a donation but I thought I would pass on the donation value of each of these cartridges :

HP 305 Black - £1; HP953XL Cyan - 10p; HP 304 Black - £1;
HP 304 Tricolour - £1.25; Canon 540 Black £1; Canon 541 £1.75.

So you can see how they mount up when there are a good number and I think we should be receiving a donation of about £24 which all helps our funds.

RECYCLE BOOKS

I have also recently sent off some books we had read at home and for those, which are valued individually also, we should receive £11.90. Remember, every little helps.

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, Darent - 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