

**BEXLEY UNITED
REFORMED
CHURCH**



**AUTUMN
NOVEMBER 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 23rd November 2025

**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 November 2025 at 10.30am except where stated

	<u>Minister</u>	<u>Elder</u>
Sunday 2 nd November	Rev. Ian Gow	Philip
Sunday 9 th November		
<u>10.00am</u>	Rev. Bryn Thomas	Philip
	Remembrance Parade Service	
Sunday 9 th November		
<u>5.00pm</u>	Service for Loved Ones	Ann
Sunday 16 th November	The Minister	
	Holy Communion	Ann
Sunday 23 rd November	John Twidale	Philip
Sunday 30 th November	Philip Shepherd	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 October are:-

Sunday 2 nd November	Elizabeth Whorlow, Philip Shepherd
Sunday 9 th November	Remembrance Day
Sunday 16 th November	Mavis Wilson, Sue Clark
Sunday 23 rd November	Jackie, Fred & Matthew Benson,
Sunday 30 th November	Edward & Essie Boateng, Val Fox

Please also continue to remember in your prayers – Tony & Ann, John Johnstone.

Pause for Thought

Sunday 2 nd November	Ann
Sunday 9 th November	Remembrance Parade Service
Sunday 16 th November	Essie
Sunday 23 rd November	Stephanie
Sunday 30 th November	Linda

Flowers for November

Sunday 2 nd November	Elizabeth
Sunday 9 th November	Stephanie
Sunday 16 th November	Sandy
Sunday 23 rd November	Margaret (Salby)
Sunday 30 th November	Linda

AUTUMN BAZAAR

SATURDAY 8th NOVEMBER

10.00am – 12 noon

Free Admission

Light Refreshments

SUNDAY AFTERNOON CONCERT

SUNDAY 30th NOVEMBER

3.00pm – 4.30pm

JIMMY VAN LIN

All Welcome

The Minister's Pastoral Letter **For November (1)**

Dear Friends,

I am delighted that our congregation voted in favour of a declaration of inclusiveness at our last church meeting; a small poster featuring a rainbow, with a meaningful statement, to be displayed at the entrance to the church. I think this is a positive step.

Welcoming LGBTQ+ people into our church is important. It is important to welcome anyone who comes to participate in our social activities or who wish to worship God with us on Sunday mornings. But it is not enough for us to be passively welcoming. We must also be open to others as they are, with their needs and characteristics, and make an effort to get to know and recognize them. In the case of welcoming LGBTQ+ people, it would be unacceptable for followers of Jesus to say, "We welcome you, but we disapprove of the kind of relationship or sexual relationship you have." Even today, there are still large Christian denominations in the world that say in their official texts that LGBTQ+ people are sinners or have a disordered lifestyle. Only the Pharisees are capable of such certainties.

One of the difficulties recognised by many LGBTQ+ people is the fact of being closeted. No one should have to remain closeted. I myself do not wish to be closeted. Christ is a redeemer, a liberator. His Lordship consists in freeing those who are imprisoned, including those who are imprisoned within themselves because they are afraid to reveal who they are. We do not want such an environment to exist in our churches because it is contrary to the witness of Christ's faith.

What does Jesus do with and for LGBTQ+ people? He enters their homes and eats with them. He tells his disciples to go into the villages. His disciples go into the homes of people who welcome

them. LGBTQ+ people are among those whose homes the disciples visit. It is a kind of village visited by the disciples. They are welcomed there and can talk about the kingdom of God and the salvation offered in Christ. In Christianity, welcoming people is not just about letting people and visitors into our churches. Paradoxically, it is we Christians who are welcomed by others.

The process we are beginning by displaying this poster must be repeated for other categories of people. I sincerely believe that this kind of approach is in line with reconnecting our congregation with the community.

I wish you all a happy autumn season, at home and with your families.

Rev. Rodolphe Blanchard-Kowal.

Flowers

The 2026 Flower Rota is now available at the back of the Church. If you would like to chose any particular dates for next year please do so, several people were disappointed when they came to make their choice to find it had already been filled.

As usual if you would like help with your flowers just ask, otherwise Margaret or I are willing to arrange them for you.

Thank you to all who donated flowers for the Church this year. It is always uplifting to see fresh flowers each Sunday, and reminds us how beautiful the world is and how good the Lord is in "All things bright and beautiful, the Lord God makes them all".

Mavis

The Minister's Pastoral Letter

For November (2)

The longer I live with you in Bexley, and the more I observe the local community, the world we live in and how our congregation interacts with them, the more I think that what we are missing is a more intense and renewed community engagement.

Over time and in keeping with the tradition of our Church, we have established excellent activities and social events. Every week, dedicated teams of energetic, cheerful and reliable elders run our cafes, meals and other classes and workshops. While all of this is excellent and deserves praise, it must be said that we are failing to gather younger people and families. In the past, church attendance had great educational and moral significance, and even more than that, it also had a very noble political meaning. That is why, as a young adult, I decided to become more involved in my local church when I got married and started a family. By adhering to the Christian faith and becoming a disciple of Christ, one takes a critical and distant stance towards the values of the world, the uncontrolled turmoil into which people unconsciously rush, often at the cost of great injustices (ecological and social). By focusing on Christ and his gospel, parents collectively show their children a positive direction, in conformity with God's love for this world. Hence the importance of the presence of young parents and children in our churches today,. We miss them terribly.

The kind of community engagement I would like to focus on in the next phase of my ministry with you is conversation, debate about ideas that people need to talk about. We need to respond to the anxiety arising from the trap of social media and artificial intelligence into which many young people and others have fallen. I have begun, in dialogue with our elders' meeting and within the pastorate, to develop a partnership with a wonderful charity that works in our borough: Act for Change. This group has a culture of organizing public forums where people can express themselves on all kinds of topics. This reinvigorates a democracy that is always under threat if

people become desperate and start to think cynically about world trends. Talking to fellow citizens, expressing our fears and realizing that we are not alone in feeling them is important. Our congregation needs to be in these places and able to share the Christian way of dealing with anxiety, even the deepest anxiety.

“Strive first for the kingdom of God and God’s righteousness”
Matthew 6:33.

I wish you a happy November, filled with fond memories of our loved ones and all those whose memory we cherish.

Rev. Rodolphe Blanchard-Kowal

Harvest

We were pleased to welcome the Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and their leaders and parents to the Harvest Service and thank all those who contributed to the Food Bank by their gifts.

In addition to all the dry goods i.e. tinned food, cereals, toiletries, etc. we were able to donate an additional £100.00 raised by the sale of the fruit and vegetables which decorated the windowsills.

Mavis

Letter from an Elder

Dear Friends,

I am delighted that Rev'd Bryn Thomas has accepted the invitation to lead our worship on Remembrance Sunday, 9th November. Of course, this is a chance to remind you on that Sunday and only that Sunday we meet at 10am to allow any that want to leave us to get over the road to the War Memorial for the two-minute silence at 11am.

Bryn is well known to many of you from his time at Bexley but for Valerie Loader and me he was our tutor, councillor and guide when we were doing our Lay Preaching training. I still feel I'm learning from him so I'm sorry I will not be with you for the service.

Bee and I will be in Belgium and France for the weekend with a party of 37 Scouts. We are staying in the Peace Village at Mesen in Belgium not far from Ypres and on Saturday we will be visiting the Tyne Cot cemetery with almost 12,000 graves and later the Flanders Fields Meuseun. We will be popping into St George's CofE to invest three new members. In the evening to the Menin Gate for the Last Post and to lay our poppy wreaths.

On Sunday we go to La Coupole, located 5 km from Saint-Omer (in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais), France. This is a former V2 Base built with slave labour but now a museum. Here we will hold our Remembrance Sunday Service.

I can remember the services I attended as a young Scout. In those days Scouts wore shorts and short sleeved shirts. The war memorial in Wallasey was on the New Brighton promenade where the wind blew straight off Liverpool Bay. Cold memories.

In those early days the focus still seemed on the Glorious Dead and probably only the British dead.

I am so pleased that we have been able to move on. The specimen service produced by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland includes a commitment to seek for peace. I have both Japanese and German children in my Scout Troop.

These days we have the charity "Help for Heroes". That title worries me. Do not get me wrong. I am not against helping heroes but I want to support those who are not heroes, those who were just in the wrong place at the wrong time, those who were conscripted and had no choice and the non-combatants, including those considered our enemies.

History is hard. We look back at Chamberlain, Halifax and the other appeasers of 1939. They have not been treated very well for their efforts to avoid war but I'm glad they tried. I suspect Hitler was only going to be stopped by war.

I did enjoy Linda's "Pause for Thought" from a few weeks ago. Who is shaking the Jar now?

*John Twidale,
Elder*

Pause for Thought

If you put 100 black ants in a jar, nothing happens. If you add 100 red ants to the jar, nothing happens. But if you shake the jar hard, they start fighting until they destroy each other. The red ants think the black ants are the enemy, and the black ants think the red ants are the enemy.

But the real enemy is the one shaking the jar. The same thing happens in human society. Before we fight each other, we should ask who is shaking the jar?



Christmas Carol Singing outside the flower shop is

Wednesday 10 December, Meet 5pm Bexley URC for 5:30pm start outside Flowers from Bexley. (The church will stay open while we are singing for 50 minutes for people to stay or only sing for a shorter time)

Saturday 13th December meet 5pm Bexley URC for 5.30 at the Railway Tavern



Christian Unity Service will be held at Bexley URC on Sunday 18 January at 3:00pm.