# BEXLEY UNITED REFORMED CHURCH




## AUTUMN/WINTER
## NOVEMBER & DECEMBER
## 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 13th December 2026

BEXLEY URC CHURCH HALL
& RUXLEY ROOM

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

No: 269/70

**Services for November and December 2026**
**at 10.30am except where stated**

| | Preacher | Elder |
|---|---|---|
| Sunday 1st November | Val Loader | Mavis |
| Sunday 8th November | Tony Ball | Philip |
| | Remembrance Sunday Service at 10am | |
| Sunday 8th November | Mavis Wilson | |
| | 5.00pm Service for Loved Ones | |
| Sunday 15th November | Rev Ian Gow | Keith |
| | Holy Communion | |
| Sunday 22nd November | Martin Leonard | Mavis |
| Sunday 29th November | John Twidale | Suzanne |
| Sunday 6th December | Suzanne Whitnall | Keith |
| | Toy Service Parade Service | |
| Sunday 13th December | John Twidale | Mavis |
| Sunday 13th December | Suzanne Whitnall | Philip |
| | 3.00pm Carol Service | |
| Sunday 20th December | Kathy Shaw | Keith |
| | Holy Communion | |
| Friday 25th December | 10.0am Christmas Day | |
| | Service at Emmanuel Church, Sidcup | |
| Sunday 27th December | John Twidale | Philip |

**Communion Fund**

The Communion Fund is for those who are known to us who are in need. Gifts may be place 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 November and December are:-

| | |
|---|---|
| Sunday 1st November | Penny & Colin Denyer, Philip Shepherd |
| Sunday 8th November | Pam Collins, Elizabeth Whorlow, Angela Davis |
| Sunday 15th November | Mavis Wilson, Christine Cornish |
| Sunday 22nd November | Eileen Hollingsworth, Dorothy Down |
| Sunday 29th November | Peter Linder, June Bobby |

| | |
|---|---|
| Sunday 5th December | Kathy Shaw, Stephanie & David Honey, Michael Adams |
| Sunday 13th December | Helen & Mike North, Sue Clark |
| Sunday 20th December | Debbie & Ian Markey & Family |
| Sunday 27th December | Linda Wells, Benson Family. |

Please continue to remember in your prayers – Essie and Edward, Helen North and Family, Val Howe, Angela Davis, Peggy Simmonds

**Pause for Thought**

| | |
|---|---|
| Sunday 1st November | Linda |
| Sunday 8th November | Remembrance Service |
| Sunday 15th November | Essie |
| Sunday 22nd November | Stephanie |
| Sunday 29th November | Linda |
| Sunday 6th December | Toy Service |
| Sunday 13th December | Stephanie |
| Sunday 20th December | Essie |
| Sunday 27th December | Linda |

**Flowers for November & December**

| | |
|---|---|
| Sunday 1st November | Elizabeth |
| Sunday 8th November | Michael |
| Sunday 15th November | Stephanie |
| Sunday 22nd November | Sandy |
| Sunday 29th November | Linda |
| Sunday 6th December | Ellie |
| Sunday 13th December | Suzanne |
| Sunday 20th December | ) Christmas |
| Sunday 27th December | ) Christmas |

**Parade Toy Service – Sunday 6th December 2026**

We are again supporting Bexley Women's Aid at our Toy Service this year. They only have a few under-5's at the moment. So toys suitable for older children main ages are from 6-16/18 boys and girls. It seems that teenage boys are less well catered for, tricky age! Toys, games, puzzles, High Street Gift vouchers-Primark, Boots, Argos, etc, toiletry sets, clothing items, stocking fillers, sweets, wrapping paper, sellotape. It is best if gifts are new and unwrapped so staff can sort them for the families they are supporting. They are also happy to take items suitable for women using their services or items for goody bags/hampers such as nets of coins, tubs of sweets, biscuits etc.

*Kathy*

**SUNDAY AFTERNOON CONCERT**

**SUNDAY 15th NOVEMBER**
**3.00pm – 4.30pm**

**THE SERENADERS**

**All are welcome**

**SUNDAY AFTERNOON CONCERT**

**SUNDAY 6th DECEMBER**
**3.00pm – 4.30pm**

**GREEN CABIN BAND**

**All are welcome**

## ALetter from a non-serving Elder

## A Service in August

One Sunday in August two pre-teen boys appeared in the congregation. Why they had decided to come or where they had come from was unknown to me. However, I was pleased to see that they received a good welcome at the front door and a church member showed them where the Peace Prayer was to be found. Sadly, they did not stay long, probably because our service was not suitable for them.

This set me questioning what was there, that was unappealing to youngsters? My first thought was that the hymns were unlike those they might have sung in school assembly. We often sing 19th century, or earlier hymns, with antiquated language e.g. thee, thou and thine.

You could argue that was probably our own experience when we were young, before we left the main church and set off for our Sunday School class. Times have changed just as teaching methods have changed. The number of electronic aids available to teachers would astonish us. Children, even at a young age, are familiar with mobile phones and computers and thus their expectations are very different.

It is no wonder that children would find our traditional service boring. That is not a reflection on the good souls, who regularly lead our worship. The dilemma is; how do you devise a service suitable for the older generation and still make other generations comfortable? Unless we solve the problem, Bexley URC will gradually fade away.

*John Johnstone*

## The Church Hall refurbishment

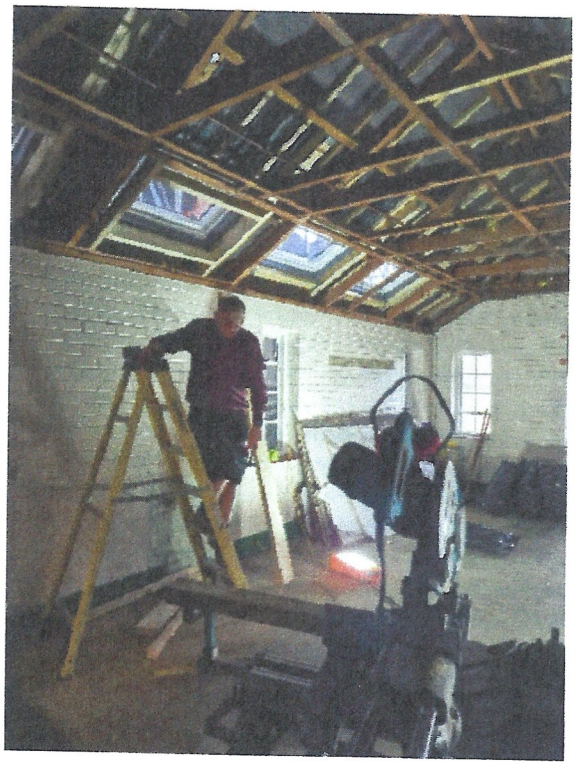
How are they getting on? What's been done?

We've all been keen to see what's happening, haven't we?

Well, on October 7th, Philip, Keith & I met with the contractors & the architects for the monthly update & we were able to look round! And here are some photos:



This is the hall, showing the new Velux windows along the right-hand side, which will help to give the hall natural daylight once the cupboards are in place in the gap between the hall & the Ruxley Room.

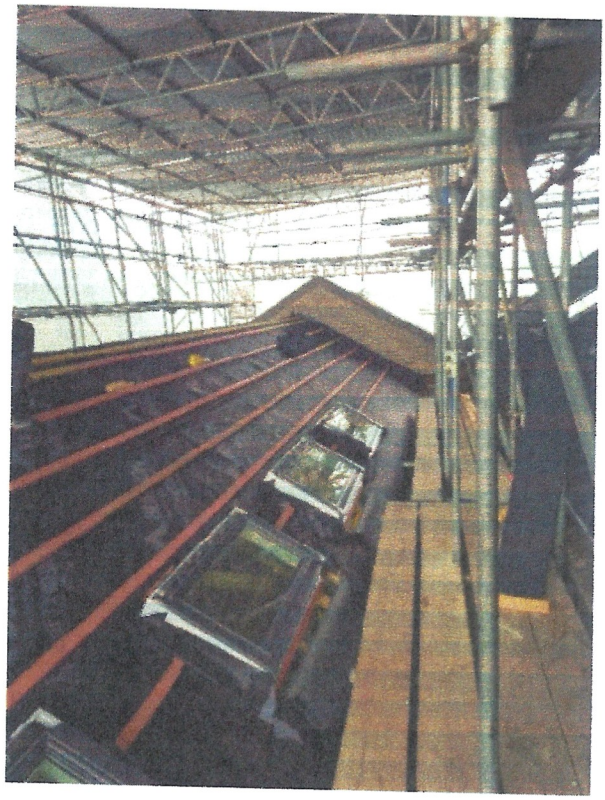


This is the Ruxley Room. More of those Velux windows - but smaller!

Then we were allowed up to see the roof! It was very wet getting up & down, & I needed a bit of encouragement to go up the ladder, but it was interesting once we arrived - & it wasn't too high up!



Looking down into the hall.



The Ruxley Room roof with the extra battens going on.

And now we can see the extent of the scaffolding! It looks even bigger when you're inside it!

A good job there's plenty of plastic covering to keep the workers (and us!) dry!



Nice new tiles.

The work is on track, although some necessary extra work has added a little more time for completion.

We are lucky to be using excellent architects & contractors. They are all very obliging, & are keen to work with us to help us keep going as best we can while the work is being carried out.

I'll post another update in another month or so.

Suzanne Whitnall

## Parables

In my first term at Techer Training College, we trainees were sent in groups of five to schools for a number of afternoons, accompanied by a tutor, and assigned a lesson to teach. I drew the short straw, and I was told to teach an RE lesson on the parables. I was out of my depth, but I duly prepared my lesson. It was my misfortune to follow a lesson by a fellow student, who even at that early stage appeared born to teach. Thus, I was more nervous, particularly as my fellow students would be asked for a critical appraisal of my lesson before the Tutor added his contribution.

Most of the congregation will know that Jesus taught using parables and could name at least three parables without much thought. The parables of the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son and the Sower would quickly sprint to mind.

Why did Jesus use this method to get his message across? The first reason is probably because we all like stories, particularly when they are about things with which we are familiar. Secondly, Jesus wanted his listeners not only to enjoy the story but also to ponder on the meaning behind the story. The meaning was not always instantly apparent. Even his disciples sometimes asked for an explanation.

The parable of the Good Samaritan answered the question 'who is my neighbour'? The answer was told in the story and illustrated that if you wanted to be a good neighbour, you had to be caring and unselfish. In the case of the Samaritan, he did not now the victim of a robbery and despite Jews and Samaritans being enemies, he decided to help the victim, while others passed by.

The Prodigal Son was about being able to forgive, even in the most trying circumstances and the sub-story was about the difficulty the younger brother had in, forgive not only forgiving his returning older brother but also understanding his father's generosity. Jesus wanted his followers to know that there was always a possibility that God would forgive provided that they repented their sins.

As for the Parable of the Sower, it illustrated all the problems we might face in keeping our faith. There can be so many distractions and difficulties along the way just as the seed scattered by the sower, had to cope with lack of soil, weeds and other problems.

The parables were certainly an effective way of getting a message across. Just how effective may be seen in the way such phrases as 'The Good Samaritan' and 'the Prodigal Son' have entered everyday language, even after the many centuries since the stories were first told.

*John Johnstone*

**Benefect Trust**

We were very pleased and thankful for the building grant of £48,000 from the Benefact Trust towards the re-development of our hall. The Benefact Trust (formerly Allchurches Trust) aims to drive positive social change by empowering those who seek to make a difference in Christian charities and churches. Building grants are to protect and enhance Christian buildings for future generations, which has been the purpose of our project.

The questions on the application form were clear and relevant but required some thought to provide appropriate answers. After receipt of our application the grants officer, Joanna Luck, asked additional questions which showed that our application was clear but required some further explanation. From the next response it was clear that the application had been understood. The trustees approved and paid the grant promptly.

*Philip Shepherd*

## Harvest Festival

Our Harvest Festival Service held on 4th October was lead by Suzanne and attended by all of our Uniformed Organisations i.e. Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Rangers.

All the harvest gifts were for the Bexley Food Bank, who had requested that toiletories in addition to food, fruit and vegetables would be most acceptable. The response was extremely good.

Some of the fruit and flowers were taken to housebound friends and the rest were sold after the service, which raised £80.00, which was also donated to the Food Bank.

The service was very enjoyable and focused on the young people present, who helped Suzanne find the answers, as you will already have read. Well done, one and all.



## Our Harvest Prayers

As part of the Harvest Parade service we wrote down the things we each wanted to talk to God about – either to thank Him, to say sorry to Him, or to ask for His help. We stuck these on autumn leaves & made a prayer wreath, which looked beautiful.

We deliberately didn't read the prayers out during the service & no names have been recorded, but we did think it would be nice for everyone to see what had been written.

So, here is a list of our prayers:

| **Please help, God...** | **God, I am sorry for...** | **Thank you, God, for...** |
|---|---|---|
| Those that are in need of food | Not putting enough effort into a project | *Named person* and *Named person* |
| Us to take care of the Earth | Getting angry and not focusing on you and family | My family |
| The animals | Not being nicer to *Named person* | Mum and cat |
| School | Me and *Named person* | Food and family |
| *Named person* knee<br>Girls settling in<br>*Named person* sleep<br>My job | No rain | My beautiful and thoughtful kind and caring family |
| The less fortunate<br>Me to always put others before myself | Making a mess | The fun and friendship our children get in our uniformed organisations |
| The sick | Losing stuff | The food we eat |
| Home work | Being rude | School and my community |
| Manage my anger | Not always listening | Good friends |
| Make our world better | My sins | The fun I have |
| My pain | All the litter on the whole land /country | My family and children |
| Me to care for others more | For punching people and not believing in you | Love, care from others |
| Us not littering | The damage done to our world that God created | Shelter |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| All in need | The way I have wasted natural resources | Food and toys |
| Those who are in trouble | Not always being nice | Health and strength |
| Me because my dad says dad jokes ? Bad jokes | The children in struggling countries and their families | My lovely cat |
| Me right now, I have too much on my mind | Naughty | Pets |
| To feed the hungry<br>Stop the wars | Taking things for granted | Protecting me and my family.<br>Providing for us |
| The leaders of the Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Rangers | The lies I have told | School and friends |
| The world | Getting angry easily | A long life |
| With my reading and phonetics | The rubbish | Food |
| With all my learning | All the planet | School, food, drink |
| love | Hurting others | Good health |
| My knee<br>Sleep | Wasting food | My 3 dogs |
| With my learning | Letting people down | My wonderful family |
| | Being mean to my nan | |
| | The selfishness I witness but stay silent | |
| | Not helping everyone in need | |
| | Not trusting God | |
| | Not listening to my mummy | |
| | The street men | |
| | My impatience | |

**The climate is changing**
*(based on the hymn written by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette (1961-)*

The climate is changing creation cries out
your people face flooding and fire and drought.
We see the great heat waves and storms at their worst
We pray for the poor, Lord, for they suffer first.

We pray for the animals in our midst
Who cannot defend their own right to exist
We pray for the mountains, the forests and seas
That bear the harsh footprint of our human greed.

We thank you for people who treasure the earth
Whose faith has long taught them its beauty and worth
And we also thank you for those people who
Can look to the future and speak out the truth.

We thank you for leaders courageous and brave
Who know that the earth is worth fighting to save
Who care about justice and what they should do
Who listen to science and work hard for you.

You love this good earth and you sent us your Son
May we love our neighbours there's work to be done
May we, by your spirit, do all in our power
To care for your earth in this critical hour.



Commitment for Life

The United Reformed Church

Christian aid

Supporting Bangladesh

**What is Commitment for Life?**

Commitment for Life is the URC's world justice programme. Our goal is to enable you, the local congregation, to make global justice a core foundation of your mission.

**Bangladesh**

Poor governance, debilitating trade deals, global banking are huge issues. Then there is an over-dependency on natural resources. Now the impact of climate disruption is making things far worse.

But you can help local communities for climate disruption, support farmers to improve their harvest, and women participate fully in vital decisions. Christian Aid partners are committed to ensuring poor and marginalised people enjoy thriving and dignified lives.

Across the globe, women are stepping into roles once considered off-limits. They lead farms, build cooperatives and create businesses in spaces where their presence was not always welcomed. Early marriage and limited access to education means that many women never get the chance to earn an income.

Did you know your prayers and giving help people in Bangladesh? Christian Aid have been working in Bangladesh since 1972. It works through a network of partners focusing on resilient livelihoods, climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction, gender equality and inclusion particularly for women and Dalit communities.

Dear God, thank you for your gift of the world you created. We thank you for flowers and trees; for animals, for birds and sea creatures; We thank you for

sunshine and rain. We thank you for farmers, workers of the land, wholesalers and for retailers.

God of the harvest, of peace and of hope, we lift before you the struggles of the earth. Give us wisdom to care for your world, courage to seek justice, and have thankful hearts. Amen

*Thank you for your ongoing support to Commitment for Life.*

*Submitted by Kathy*

**A Prayer for Palestine**

Lord of life, breathe your life into our dark days.
Lord of peace, guide our words and actions to become instruments of your true and lasting peace.
Lord of justice, teach us your righteousness and lead us in your truth.
Lord of mercy, look upon us with compassion, and shape our hearts after your merciful heart.
Lord, we pray for our land, Palestine. A wounded land, fragmented by walls and checkpoints, scarred by violence, and burdened by fear and hatred. Have mercy on us.

With the prophet Isaiah we cry: "Oh, that you would tear open the heavens and come down." Come down, O Lord, and establish your justice, your peace, and your steadfast love among us. How long, O Lord? How long shall our cries seem unanswered? How long shall our people endure violence, loss, and dehumanization? Come, Lord, and restore your image in us and in those we call our enemies.

We trust in you, Lord, yet we are weary. We know you hear us, yet our pain has become heavy to bear.

Come, Lord, empower us, though weary, to run for justice and peace. Come, Lord, touch our weeping souls to see the light of your righteousness. Lead us from the shadow of death into the joy of the resurrection and the fullness of life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Written by Bishop Dr. Imad Haddad, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land*

*(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

**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**

**Girlguiding**
Bexley & Blendon district

## 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