



FOREST GROUP
of the United Reformed Church

www.forestgroupurc.co.uk



NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2019

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OUR CHURCHES

Chingford URC

Buxton Road, Chingford, E4 7DP

St James' URC

Palmerston Road, Buckhurst Hill, Essex, IG9 5NG

Woodford Green URC

High Elms, Woodford Green, Essex, IG8 0UP

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MATERIAL FOR THE MARCH NEWSLETTER NEEDS TO BE WITH THE EDITOR BY SUNDAY 17TH FEBRUARY

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PASTORAL LETTER

Dear friends,

Our first Holy Habit of Eating Together and our conversations in groups and at church bring up a lot of memories of meals shared. One of the most special meals that I have been invited to was in Israel: my flatmate invited me to her family meal for Passover, to her grandparents' house, who were survivors of the Shoah. I felt very nervous beforehand, and they must have felt so too, inviting a descendant of Nazi Germany into their home for their most holy meal. When I arrived, they were very friendly, though all of us quite unsure. There was the heavy weight of history, a lot of unspoken questions and stories untold, and the holiness of the interfaith occasion: I had never been invited to a Pesach Seder (Passover meal), the meal that Jesus shared with his friends on the last day of his life.



I will never forget this. How they were so very welcoming. How the old tradition (the special set Passover liturgy, the order) of the meal took me in as well and, by sharing the old words and songs of the Jewish people, by

sharing the special foods that go with each reading and the special cups of wine that go with each section, how this meal made me, a German and Christian guest, part of them. It made me part of their story, and my story part of theirs. By inviting me and sharing this

meal we were able to grow together for this time, grow over and across the horrors of history and be together in God-time.

The meal laid the ground for what happened then: The grandfather started talking. About his time in Auschwitz. And how he managed to escape over the fence. How, by escaping, he had to leave his wife and children behind, knowing that they would be murdered. How he joined the partisans in the woods. How after the war he made to Switzerland, and how he there met his wife of now, got married to make sure life continued, and went to Israel.

Everybody was listening, spellbound. You could have heard a needle drop. Every now and then his wife, who was busying herself in the kitchen, came around wanting him to stop talking. But he wouldn't. He wanted me to hear.

Later, my friend told me how rarely grandpa spoke about the past, and that her parents have never been allowed to hear these stories. I knew that in most survivors' families the children are left in the dark; only the grandchildren are allowed to ask questions.

Without the meal, this time of precious sharing of stories, of truth, of naked memories would not have been possible.

Without the bravery of my friend's grandparents, deciding to open their home for me, none of this would have happened.

This was big, God-filled time. But even in the small, amazing contact can happen. Even in the small, over a cup of tea, offered in one of our homes to someone who has not been there before, God-filled time can happen. Stories can be told, hearts made feel a little bit happier,

less alone, more encouraged. “This is good. Together we can do this!”

If they were able to open their home to me, how much more should we be able to open our homes to someone we know and who is not even an enemy. Have a cup of tea, maybe some nibbles can be found, and if not, it does not matter.

May God bless us in this time of practicing the holy habit of Eating Together.

Yours, in Christ

Ulrike

CAN YOU HELP?

Pilots is a Christian non-uniformed organisation for children aged 4 – 11 years. Our Forest Group Pilots meet on Fridays from 6.00pm at Woodford Green. Suzanne Corney is the Pilots’ Captain, but she needs helpers. Could you spare a few hours each week, or once a month, or from time to time. Any time you can spare would be welcome. Please speak to Ulrike or Suzanne and they will give you more details.

FROM THE EDITOR

We invested in advertising our Christmas services in a free publication produced by the local Guardian group. I didn’t receive a copy of this, and wondered if anybody else had seen it. This will be helpful in deciding how to publicise our Easter events and services. Please let me know if you received the publication and saw our advertisement. June Colley

SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP

All services commence at 10:30am unless otherwise stated.

Chingford

- 3 Feb Holy Communion – Revd John Steele
- 10 Feb All age service – Revd Ulrike Bell
- 17 Feb Mona Shahbaz
- 24 Feb Trevor Cottrell
- 3 Mar Holy Communion – Revd Kevin Swaine

St. James', Buckhurst Hill

- 3 Feb Holy Communion – Revd Ulrike Bell
(Sacramental offertory for the Bible Society)
- 10 Feb Revd June Colley
- 17 Feb Revd Ulrike Bell *(followed by church meeting)*
- 24 Feb Grace Smith
- 3 Mar Holy Communion – Revd Claire Wilson
*(Sacramental offertory for London Churches
Refugee Network)*

Woodford Green

- 3 Feb Holy Communion – Revd June Colley
- 10 Feb Elders
- 17 Feb Revd June Colley
- 24 Feb Revd Ulrike Bell
- 3 Mar Holy Communion – Revd Ulrike Bell

CHURCH EVENTS

- Monday 4 **St. James'** 2.00-3.30pm Craft/Prayer Group in church room
- Tuesday 5 **Woodford Green** 8.00pm Elders meeting at the manse
- Wednesday 6 **Woodford Green** 10.00am Buildings Group
- Thursday 7 **Holy Habits Group** 7.30pm at home of Geoff and Eileen Packe
- St. James'** 7.30pm Elders Meeting in church room
- Monday 11 **Holy Habits Group** 10.30am in church room at St. James'
- Wednesday 13 **Chingford** 7.30pm Board of Management
- Monday 18 **Woodford Green** 2.30pm Jubilee Club – Jean Wyber
- Mon18/ Thur21 **Chingford** Half Term Bible Holiday Club
- Tuesday 19 **Holy Habits Group** 10.00am at home of June Colley
- Thursday 21 **Chingford** 8.00pm Elders meeting

- Sunday 24 **Holy Habits Group** 5.00pm at home of Kevin and Helen Haigh
- Monday 25 **Woodford Green** 2.30pm Jubilee Club – The story of Gilbert and Sullivan illustrated in song with Nick Dobson
- Wednesday 27 **Chingford** 12noon Lunch Club

March

- Sunday 3 **Forest Group Council** 2.00pm at Woodford Green
- Monday 4 **St. James'** 2.00-3.30pm Craft/Prayer Group in church room
- Tuesday 5 **St. James'** 10.30am Fair Trade Coffee Morning in the church room
- Thursday 7 **St. James'** 7.30pm Elders Meeting in church room



FOREST GROUP

COFFEE MORNING

10.30 am in the Woodford Manse on

Tuesday 5th February

'Holy Habits - eating together'

All are welcome to our lively discussions!

UNBELIEVABLE 3: TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

HALF TERM PLAYScheme

for Yrs 5 to 6 at

Chingford United Reformed Church, E4 7DP

Art & Craft* Drama* Songs

Games* Prizes* Challenges*

Bible Stories and more....!

18th – 21st February 2019

Standard Day (9 – 3 pm) £12

Half Day sessions for £6

Subsidised places available for siblings,

certain benefit recipients and

families allocated Pupil Premium

Register today at

www.rbf.org.uk/weekendsholidays

EXTERNAL EVENTS

Westminster College , Cambridge

Introduction to Pastoral Care

25th -27th February

Introduction to Christian Worship

26th – 28th February

To book a place email: admin@westminster.cam.ac.uk

or Tel: 01223 330632

London Inter Faith Centre, 125 Salusbury Road, NW6 6RG

Does Religion have a place in 21st Century?- a series of interactive seminars exploring the place of religion in the UK in 21st century.

Wednesdays 2.00pm - 3.30pm: Feb. 13th & 27th and March 6th

Info: laurance.hille@londoninterfaith.org.uk

Cockfosters Centre for Spirituality, 29 Bramley Road, Oakwood N144HE

Faith's unfolding over your lifetime-workshop with Jonathan Males

To book a place email: cockfosters@rcdow.org.uk

or telephone: 020 84496648

ARTICLES

REFLECTION: REPENT!

There are two things which are absolutely vital to our Christian lives; repentance and faith. Today I want to talk about repentance. When King David saw Bathsheba bathing, he made enquiries about her and discovered that she was Uriah's wife. Despite the fact that he knew God would not approve, he committed adultery with her, then tried to cover it up. He was more concerned about his reputation with the people around him than obedience to God. Eventually he arranged for Uriah to be killed in battle so nobody would know. Later Nathan the prophet confronted David and he suddenly saw how wrong he had been. David was horror-stricken at what he had done. (2 Samuel 11 and 12). That is repentance.

He then wrote Psalm 51. Verse 4 says: "Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge." He realised that the only person whose opinion really matters is God's and that his biggest mistake by far was to disobey God. That was where things started to go wrong. One sin leads to another, and another until you forfeit your relationship with God altogether, or you admit your mistake and turn to Him for forgiveness.

Most people take the first choice, but David had already tasted the sweetness of a relationship with God and knew that his only chance to recover that was to throw himself on God's mercy. That requires an exercise of faith and trust. That is why I believe that repentance and faith are a pair and always go together. I have heard it said that it

is always best to keep short accounts with God. Do not wait to go back to God and ask his forgiveness. We fail with depressing regularity, and so we need to keep going back to Him.

Kevin Haigh

HAD ENOUGH OF BREXIT? CATCH ANOTHER BUS

It's not an easy time of year is it? Dull grey skies and cold weather increasingly in the forecast and then the seemingly impossible conundrum that is Brexit. Whether we will be any closer to a settlement when this article is published I somehow doubt with all sorts of opinions and opinion-makers pitching their stalls in the press and Parliament.

Every year I try to get to the CND London conference which takes place in early January; I have been a member for many years but have to say I have not been very active in my support. Yet listening to this year's excellent speakers addressing the issues under the title "Trump's finger on the Nuclear Button" it was hard not to think we are getting so caught up in our Brexit concerns that we are at risk of ignoring the wider picture - not that the two are not connected.

We had a very comprehensive talk from Ambassador Husam Zomlot, Head of Palestinian Mission UK who described how the Palestinian Mission in Washington was closed by President Trump in August 2018 and he and his family now live in West London following death threats in the USA. As we at St. James' contribute to supporting

Commitment for Life in the Occupied Territories I was especially interested to hear his perspective on the West and its approaches and contributions to the seemingly endless conflicts in Israel.

But I suppose what stays with me is the economics of our own situation and our part in the nuclear arms industry. I know it is highly controversial and others may disagree with me, but how can we justify the government's plans to spend at least £205 billion on a new nuclear weapons system to replace Trident, which already costs us £6.6 million a day? We never saw those figures on the side of any bus did we?

So, what can we mere mortals do? I have resolved to get in touch with my local CND branch (020 7700 2393 or enquiries@cnduk.org) to offer help. One thing in particular they are asking for is people to help by going into schools (Primary and secondary) with resources developed by CND to explain, in short sessions, why nuclear arms are irrelevant, costly and very dangerous to our world. At the Conference we were told that BAE systems, the company that is mainly responsible for the development of Trident and its replacement is already heavily sponsoring teaching materials that go into Academy schools around their main site in Barrow in Furness, encouraging children to think very positively about the design of nuclear submarines. If you look at websites for educational opportunities in the Barrow in Furness area, you can see how woven into the local economy the nuclear industry is.

We can turn a blind eye - after all Barrow is almost 300 miles away from the Forest Group and nothing has apparently happened yet. However if we do nothing we are condoning this vast expenditure on such dangerous and wasteful technology rather than using that money

for healthcare, education, housing or greener energy. If we at St. James' call ourselves an Eco-Congregation, we need to think very hard about this and raise awareness before the bus goes without us.

Margaret Minoletti
19th January 2019

RECOMMENDED FOR YOU!

Can I commend the **Anglo Saxon exhibition at the British Library** to fellow Forest Group members - it might seem a little expensive but I at least find it extraordinary and while in the building the Literary Cats exhibition is free!

Jean Wyber

CHINGFORD NEWS

JOHN GRIFFITHS 1917 – 2018

I first recall meeting John in the mid-1970s, when he and his wife Olive became members of the congregation at Chingford URC. At the time they were in their late fifties and had moved from Potters Bar so they could be nearer to their daughter Pamela who lived in Chingford. In fact “nearer” was a bit of an understatement because Pam and her husband Sam lived in an upper maisonette and John and Olive bought the one downstairs. When my mother Phyllis, one of the Church elders, heard the reason why they had come to Chingford

she ventured the opinion that they would be unlikely to play a particularly active part in Church life. Fortunately for us all, as we have discovered over the past forty years or so, she could not have been more wrong! They both became elders and joined wholeheartedly in very many activities, remaining close friends of Phyllis even after she had gone to live in Dorset.

John became a volunteer for Help on Call, the local charity run from St Anne's Church at Chingford Hatch. One of his main tasks was to provide transport, using his car to take elderly people to medical appointments. This he did for a great number of years, only stopping in his nineties by which time he himself was much older than many of the people he had been helping.

John and Olive also travelled extensively and John was a great collector of foreign postage stamps, specialising in countries like Australia and Papua New Guinea which they had visited often. Unusually for someone of his age John kept very much up to date with modern technology. I well recall going to see him in 2009 after my mother had died. John had been asked to prepare a short tribute to her for the Church newsletter and wanted to be sure I approved of what he what he was going to say. At that time John was 92 years old and I was expecting him to show me some handwritten notes. Instead he logged on to a computer and got up a Word document which he was proposing to forward by email to the newsletter editor. He was still emailing in December 2018. I also remember John telling me not that many years ago how he and Olive had "Skype" conversations with their son Richard and his family in Australia. Despite being about forty years younger than John I don't think I even knew at that time what Skype was. John described it to me, saying it was just like being in the same room with the people you were talking to. He

always did seem to have a knack of explaining things at just the right level. Also he took an interest in the young people of the Church, even in his final months still wanting to know how they were getting on and giving advice when asked.

John always took a great interest in sport and right up until the end of his life, just a few weeks short of his 102nd birthday, he was keen to read the cricket scores and see the football results, particularly those of his beloved Wolverhampton Wanderers who he was so pleased had gained promotion to the Premier League for the 2018-19 season.

I considered it a great privilege to be invited to John's 100th birthday party which took place in February 2017. By then after 71 years of marriage he was a widower and had gone to live at Forest Place, the residential home in Buckhurst Hill. The number of people present and all the cards and good wishes John received spoke volumes for the high esteem in which he was held by everyone who knew him. He and Olive were lovely people and truly an example to us all.

Duncan Creevy

ST JAMES' NEWS

CHRISTIAN AID BE A PEACEMAKER APPEAL

While many people are singing for peace this Christmas, members of St James URC called on the Government to act for peace as it supported Christian Aid's 'Be a Peacemaker' appeal.



With more than half of Yemen's population on the brink of famine due to war, members of St James' signed a giant Christmas card to Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt urging him to suspend UK

arms sales to Saudi Arabia immediately, work with all parties to cease hostilities and allow humanitarian access to those most in need. The card, depicting a dove made out of weaponry and ammunition, joined together with others from around the country to build pressure on the UK Government to stop fueling the arms trade and instead spend more on peacebuilding.

St James also seeks to offer peace to those locally who face difficult situations of food poverty, debt or family conflict by supporting Epping Forest Foodbank, Buckhurst Hill Money Advice Service and hosting a Child Contact Centre.

Louise Woodcock, Christian Aid Representative for St James, said: "We all have a deep longing for peace and that perhaps comes to the forefront at Christmas. But while we instinctively know that peace is essential for individuals and communities to flourish, it can be easy to overlook the role we have to play in building that peace. We can't simply sing about peace at Christmas and expect it to happen, as

Christians we believe we are given a task by Jesus to work towards a world where peace prevails alongside hope, dignity and respect. That is why we are supported Christian Aid's appeal this Christmas. They are not only supporting the work of everyday peacemakers in countries such as Colombia, South Sudan and Lebanon, but are also tackling the source of conflict by putting pressure on the UK Government to consider what it can do to build peace more effectively.

Christian Aid regional coordinator for Essex, Ben Selfe said: "We are delighted to have the support of churches like St James who are seeking to extend peace this Christmas.

"It's so important to make a stand for peace in a world where one child in every six will wake up in a conflict zone around the world. And if things continue the way they are, by 2030 more than half of the world's poorest people will live in countries affected by high levels of violence.

CAROL SINGING 2018

On the afternoon of December 7th, a small group of us from St. James' sang carols for half an hour in Queens' Road, Buckhurst Hill, as part of the Christmas Festival there. Geoff Packe accompanied us on the mandolin, so hopefully we made a joyful noise! We gave out some leaflets about Forest Group Christmas services and events to passers-by in between singing, so we felt it had been worthwhile.



On December 19th, seven of us went to Woodford Station, in the evening, and sang carols for about one hour to the people coming and going there, with Geoff playing for us again on the mandolin. We were collecting for Redbridge Single

Homeless Project and we raised £215.

Thank you very much to everyone who turned up to help, at such a busy time of year, and especially to our musician, Geoff. Thanks also to Louise and Simon who counted all the money.

Isabel Bala

FAREWELL TO VAL AND DALE

It was with a mixture of emotions that members and friends of St. James' met together for a farewell lunch on the 30th December.

Dale Gravett had faithfully served the church for ten years as Hall Manager, but when appointed we had no idea that we would be blessed with Val as well.



Together they worked tirelessly to welcome hall users and to integrate them into the life of the church. Their Christian faith shone like a beacon in the community, Nothing was too much trouble for them and everything was done with a smile.

At the lunch, Val said how happy they had been to serve the church and invited people to visit them in their new home in Lincolnshire.

They will be greatly missed, but we wish them a very happy and well-deserved retirement. Contact details can be obtained from Isabel Bala.

WOODFORD GREEN NEWS

NEWS OF CHURCH FAMILY

Margaret Woolmer has moved to be closer to her family. We wish Margaret well in her new home and thank her for everything she has done for Ray Lodge church over many years. Contact details can be obtained from Jean Wyber.

THE CHRISTMAS EXPERIENCE!

On 6th December, we welcomed two classes from the local primary school into our church building for the *Christmas Experience!* With the help of Act4, a group working in the Synod to help churches with their children and youth work, we invited the children to experience Christmas by meeting some of the characters from the Christmas story. In small groups they went around the building listening and asking questions and collecting mementoes to take away.



Here the children meet Mary as she does her chores and hear about what life was like for her in a small town in Judea. Later they met the Angel Gabriel who told them about the message given to Mary. Then they met the innkeeper who told them about

what was happening in Bethlehem and how Mary and Joseph could not find anywhere to stay. And in a small side chapel they met a shepherd. We were lucky to have Eileen Packe to help us as she grew up on a farm and her stories about life for shepherds were very authentic! Thank you to our actors and we are doing it all again at Easter with a different cast of characters.



DIRECTORY

CHINGFORD UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Buxton Road, Chingford, E4 7DP

www.chingfordurc.org.uk

CHURCH OFFICE		Tel: 8529 8888
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TREASURER	Eileen Wallace	Tel: 8524 2270
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REGULAR EVENTS

Sunday	10.30 am	Morning Worship with Holy Communion on the first Sunday of each month Junior Family Church (from age 3) and Questers Tel: 8504 7518
Monday	5.30–6.30 pm	27 th Chingford Beavers Tel: 8524 2491
Tuesday	1.30–3.00 pm	Club for Under 5s and Carers (Term time only) Tel: 8529 0071
	7.00–8.30 pm	27 th Chingford Cubs Tel: 8524 2491
	7.30–9.00 pm	27 th Chingford Scouts Tel: 8524 2491
Wednesday	12 noon	Lunch Club: £4 meal Tel: 8529 0441 (last in month)
	4.30–6.00pm	Christian Youth + Club organised by Red Balloon
Thursday	5.45–7.15 pm	5 th Chingford Brownies Tel: 8529 1475
	7.30–9.00 pm	5 th Chingford Guides Tel: 8529 4420
Friday	9.30–12 noon	Coffee and Chat Tel: 8529 0441
	10.30–11.00 am	Prayer Group

ST. JAMES' UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Palmerston Road, Buckhurst Hill, Essex IG9 5NG

www.stjamesurc.org.uk

SECRETARY AND NEWSLETTER CONTACT

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HALL MANAGER

Gerald Lee Tel: 8505 0300
geraldlee@ymail.com

REGULAR EVENTS

- Sunday 10.30 am Morning Worship (with Holy Communion on the first Sunday of each month)
- Monday 2-3.30pm Craft/Prayer Group on the first Monday each month
- 5.30 pm 2nd Buckhurst Hill Brownies 8508 7546
- 7.00 pm 2nd Buckhurst Hill Guides 8508 3480
- Wednesday 7.00 pm Sing Emmanuel Choir
- Thursday 6.00-7.00 pm 28th Epping Forest Beavers 07960309175
- 6.30-8.00 pm 28th Epping Forest Cubs 8504 5270
- 7.30-9.00 pm 28th Epping Forest Scouts 07896031718

Bible Studies also take place on Mondays at 10.30am and repeated at 8.00pm at certain times during the year. Please see calendar for details.

WOODFORD GREEN
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
High Elms, Woodford Green, Essex IG8 0UP
www.wgufc.org.uk

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NEWSLETTER CONTACT
Revd June Colley

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rev@jcolley.plus.com

REGULAR EVENTS

Sunday	10.30am	Morning Worship and Junior Church (with Holy Communion on the first Sunday of each month)
	4.00pm	‘Messy Church’ second Sunday of every month
Monday	2.30pm	Jubilee Club (alternate weeks – see calendar for details)
Tuesday	6-7.30pm	14 th Woodford Brownie Pack (aged 7-10)
Thursday	7-9.00pm	14 th Woodford Guide Company (age 10-14)
Friday	9.00-10.30am	Play Café for toddlers and babies with their parents and carers
	6-7.30pm	PILOTS (a non-uniformed Christian group for children aged 4-11 years)

RAY LODGE SITE

Ray Lodge Road, Woodford Green, Essex IG8 7NX

Enquiries to Church Secretary at Woodford Green URC.

Caretaker Mr. Peter Pitt 07940 725344

REGULAR EVENTS

Tuesday 6.00 – 7.00 pm 7th Woodford Rainbow Unit
(age 5 – 7)

Wednesday 6.15 – 7.45 pm 16th Woodford Brownie Pack
(age 7 – 10)

The premises are also used by the Seventh Day Adventist Church on Saturdays for Sabbath Worship and Wednesday evenings for Prayer Meetings, and by Faith Ministries (UK Churches) on Sunday mornings.