

FOREST GROUP NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2017

“Because I live, you also will live.” John 14,19



Dear all,

I recently watched with our girls David Attenborough's film on the Galapagos islands, famous for their populations of giant tortoises. In it he explains how on these islands Charles Darwin found clues and then evidence for his theory of evolution. How all life strives to be alive and stay alive, and in order to do so, adapt in the most astonishing ways.

We all want to be alive (apart from some few people). It is pretty simple. To feel alive. Not just exist or cope, but thrive. To live out what's in us, walk tall, breathe free. We want to be less lonely, less exhausted, less stretched into directions that dampen our vitality, less afraid. We want to live more purposefully, more happily, lighter, more awake, more energised.

This yearning for aliveness is what we're all about in church. In any religion, really. We yearn for being filled up with good life

when we pray, when we read our Bible, when we gather to worship God in church.

Unfortunately, religion can have the opposite effect. It can shrink vitality, stifle or freeze aliveness rather than fostering it. Our unspoken assumptions are part of that, our lack of real and honest exchange about how we understand a piece of scripture and its possible effect on our lives. This happens when we forget to re-form God's message to apply it to our lives.

Our religious evolution: Handed down from generation to generation, through the scriptures, through many minds and through our reformed tradition, the good news of God's good life in each one of us, despite our sins/shortcomings. The Gospel is there, waiting for us to see, to marvel about, to meditate, to chew internally, to digest and get energized into action today, making us free, giving us space for that light to shine.

Please come and join our continuing spiritual evolution, our reformation at our Lent Study Groups and at our Maundy Thursday Quiet Day at St James.

Wishing you and us all a good and spiritually fruitful time of Lent!

Yours in Christ,

Ulrike

SERVICES FOR FEBRUARY

(All services commence at 10.30 am unless otherwise stated)

Chingford

- 5th **Morning Worship with Holy Communion and Prayers for Healing** led by Revd Kevin Swaine
12th **Youth Service** led by Revd Ulrike Bell
19th **9.45 Service of Holy Communion**
Morning Worship led by Revd Richard Mortimer followed by Church Meeting
26th **Morning Worship** led by Revd John Steele
2nd *Morning Worship with Holy Communion and Prayers for Healing led by Dr Paul Ashitey*

Highams Park

- 5th **Morning Worship** led by Trevor Cottrell
12th **Morning Worship** – leader to be announced
19th **Morning Worship** led by Revd Kevin Swaine
26th **Morning Worship for Mothering Sunday** – leader to be announced
2nd *Morning Worship led by Revd Richard Mortimer*

Ray Lodge

- 5th **Morning Worship** led by the Elders
12th **Morning Worship with Holy Communion** led by Revd Ann Woodhurst
19th **Morning Worship** led by Jenny Howland
26th **Morning Worship for Mothering Sunday** led by Revd Jane Mortimer

2nd *Morning Worship led by Trevor Cottrell*

St. James', Buckhurst Hill

- 5th **Morning Worship with Holy Communion** led by Revd Richard Mortimer (Sacramental Offertory for London Churches' Refugee Network)
12th **Morning Worship** led by Trevor Cottrell
19th **Morning Worship** led by Steven Neville
26th **Morning Worship and Parade Service for Mothering Sunday** led by Revd Ulrike Bell
2nd *Morning Worship with Holy Communion led by Revd Kevin Swaine (Sacramental Offertory for Camden Counselling Service)*

Woodford Green

- 5th **Morning Worship with Holy Communion** led by Revd Ulrike Bell
12th **Morning Worship** led by Revd Richard Mortimer
19th **Morning Worship** led by Revd Jane Mortimer
26th **Morning Worship for Mothering Sunday** led by Revd June Colley
2nd *Morning Worship with Holy Communion led by Revd June Colley*

CALENDAR FOR MARCH

Friday 3rd **Chingford** 11.00am Worship Group
Ray Lodge 2.00pm Knit & Natter Group

Saturday 4th **Ray Lodge** 2.00pm Trefoil Guild

Sunday 5th **Forest Group Council** 2.00pm at Woodford Green

Monday 6th **Forest Group Lent Study** 10.30am & 8.00pm
In the Church Room at St. James'
St. James' 2.00-3.30pm Craft/Prayer Group

Tuesday 7th **Forest Group Coffee & Conversation**
10.30am at the Woodford Green manse
Woodford Green 8.00pm Elders Meeting

Wed 8th **Lent lunch** 12noon-1.30pm at St. Barnabas Church Hall, Snakes Lane East

Thursday 9th **Forest Group Evening Worship** 8.00pm
On the theme of 'Lent' at St. James'.

Friday 10th **Ray Lodge** 2.00pm Neighbours' Club

Monday 13th **Forest Group Lent Study** 10.30am & 8.00pm
In the Church Room at St. James'

Tuesday 14th **St. James'** 10.30am **Fair Trade Coffee Morning**
Forest Group Worship Group 8.00pm meeting at Woodford Green manse

Wed 15th **Lent lunch** 12noon-1.30pm at St. Barnabas

Monday 20th **Forest Group Lent Study** 10.30am & 8.00pm
In the Church Room at St. James'

Thurs 16th **Chingford** 8.00pm Elders

Friday 17th **Ray Lodge** 2.00pm Knit & Natter Group

Wed 22nd **Ray Lodge Lent Lunch** 12noon-1.30pm

Friday 24th **Ray Lodge** 2.00pm Neighbours' Club

Monday 27th **Forest Group Lent Study** 10.30am & 8.00pm
In the Church Room at St. James'

Wed 29th **Ray Lodge Lent Lunch** 12noon-1.30pm

Friday 31st **Ray Lodge** 2.00pm Knit & Natter Group

April

Monday 3rd **Forest Group Lent Study** 10.30am & 8.00pm
In the Church Room at St. James'

Tuesday 4th **Forest Group Coffee & Conversation**
10.30am at the Woodford Green manse
Woodford Green 8.00pm Elders Meeting

Wed 5th **Ray Lodge Lent Lunch** 12noon-30pm

Thursday 6th **St. James'** 7.30pm Elders' Meeting

Friday 7th **Ray Lodge** 2.00pm Knit & Natter Group

LENT STUDY GROUP 'FINDING A VOICE'

A course based on extracts from the film
'The King's Speech'
Beginning on Monday 6th March
at St. James', Buckhurst Hill
at 10.30am and repeated at 8.00pm

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The London Inter Faith Centre Programme:

Details of all our activities may also be found on our website, at <http://londoninterfaith.org.uk/calendar/>

Windermere Centre:

Lent Retreat based on the film 'Jesus of Montreal'

6th - 9th March

Tel: 015394 44902

Windermere.centre@gmail.com

Sarum College, Salisbury:

Christian Faith & Ethical Living

Saturday 18th March 9.30am – 6.00pm

Re-imagining Church in a Changing Culture

Monday 27th March - Thursday 30th March

Email: courses@sarum.ac.uk

Tel: 01722424800

Westminster College, Cambridge

Quiet Day : Who are you? A day away in Lent

Sat. 4th March 10.00am - 4.00pm

Contact: admin@westminster.cam.ac.uk

Tel: 01223 33 06 33

STEPPING INTO DEMENTIA

Two full day training sessions (9.15 for a 9.30am start to 4.00pm finish) are being offered by Thames North Synod on the following dates:

Wednesday 5th of July 2017 at Lumen URC, Tavistock Place, London, WC1H 9RS

Saturday 16th of September 2017 at Ealing Green Church, The Green, Ealing, London, W5 5QT

As a result of a very good response from a number of the churches within our Synod, it has been decided that a maximum of four people will be allowed to attend from any church. If places remain available, then churches would be invited to seek additional spaces if they wished.

Each training session is for **a maximum of 20 people** and places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

As Lumen URC has a Café, we are not allowed to take our own food (packed lunches) in. It will be possible to buy lunch at the Café, or sandwiches from local outlets.

You are free to bring packed lunches to Ealing Green Church.

Please let Sandhya synodadmin@urcthamesnorth.org.uk know how many places you would like for your church and the names of those wishing to attend.

SING IMMANUEL Easter Concert

8th April 2017 at 4.00 p.m.

South Chingford Congregational Church
161 Chingford Mount Road,
Chingford, London, E4 8LT

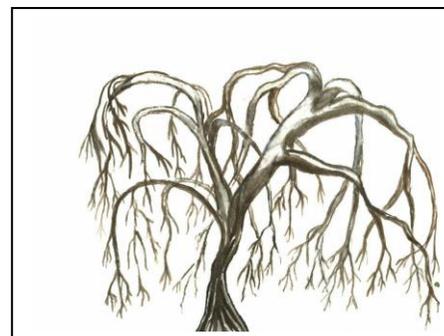
We are performing some old favourites and also a more modern version of the Easter story in a piece called 'Easter Time' by Bob Eagle. This concert would be a good opportunity to invite family and friends.

REFLECTION

How do you measure the health of someone's body? Well, doctors have countless ways of doing it, and I'm sure you know them all; they might measure the degree of agility, the capacity of the lungs, the percentage of weight given over to fat, or the level of sugars in the blood.

How do you measure the health of someone's personality? According to Ralph Waldo Emerson, you don't need any medical training at all to do that. Each person's personality, he explained, was healthy "to the exact degree to which they have the propensity to look for the good in every situation."

Thanks to The Friendship Book of Francis Gay



FOREST GROUP

QUIET DAY

Maundy Thursday,

13th April,

at St. James' URC

from 10.30am - 2.30pm

The theme this year will be: ***Focusing on God*** and there will be time for relaxation, quiet reflection, prayer and creative activities throughout the day, ending with a short Communion Service.

Lunch will be provided and there is no charge for the day, but any donations will go to The Leprosy Mission. Please let me know soon if you wish to attend.

Isabel Bala



Commitment changes lives - Commitment for Life remembers 25 years of being part of the mission of the United Reformed Church.

25 years is a long time to be in a partnership.
Can you remember what you were doing in

1992?

- The average House Price £68,634 and inflation Rate was 3.7%
- Bosnia Herzegovina declares independence and a 3 year war followed between Muslims, Serbs and Croats prompting UN intervention
- Signing of the Maastricht treaty on 7th February which founded the European Union
- Euro Disney opens in France
- Bill Clinton becomes U.S. president
- Rioting by local youth breaks out across cities including Bristol
- US refuses to sign The UN convention on Climate Change and Biological Diversity in Rio de Janeiro
- Fire damages a major part of Windsor Castle and a number of important works of art, books and furniture are lost
- The Summer Olympics are held in Barcelona, Spain
- Rioting breaks out in Los Angeles following the acquittal of four white police officers accused of beating black motorist Rodney King.
- Violence flares in Germany against Immigrants blaming them for economic problems.

Favourite films included: A Few Good Men, Sister Act, The Bodyguard, and on the television you might have been watching: One Foot in the Grave, The Crystal Maze, Casualty or Inspector Morse

AND The General Assembly of the United Reformed Church, in York, commended **Commitment for Life** to churches as a way of putting their faith into action. Having previously been known as the 1% Appeal, which encouraged Christians to give 1% of their disposable income to aid development, it would now tell stories of how the money was being used and help congregations understand about the structures that keep people poor and how to bring justice for all.

Today, Commitment for Life is firmly embedded in the mission of the church and has raised millions of pounds to help people rise out of poverty and live fulfilled lives. It has also changed the lives of those who have visited partners or heard them speak in their churches. Revd John Marsh has shared a memory from his trip with Commitment for Life to Zimbabwe in 2011.

“The kindness of her neighbours, and the visits by the nurse from the Clinic, supported by funds from Christian Aid and Commitment for Life, were Maureen’s only dying comfort and solace. “Thank you for coming to see me”, she said. These utterly poor people have nothing. So they make something out of nothing. It’s what they do. If, in the years since our visit, all had become well for Zimbabwe and its people, we could rejoice that the need was no longer there. Sadly, but truly, little has changed for the better and Commitment for Life’s active participation with Christian Aid is urgently necessary going forward.

Where there is nothing, we need to continue to do, and be, something gracious and miraculous for God and for God's people."

'So you see, faith by itself isn't enough.' (James 2:17) James wrote his epistle not with the intention of telling people how to become a Christian but rather how to act like one. James sees faith and works as integral to each other.

Commitment for Life is the world development programme of the United Reformed Church and remembers 25 years of seeking justice in 2017. They encourage participating churches to take action, pray and give for people across the world but especially in our four partner countries/regions of **Bangladesh, Central America (Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua and El Salvador), Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory and Zimbabwe.**

They work in partnership with Christian Aid and Global Justice Now and have raised millions of pounds. Some of our churches in the Forest Group are contributors to the Commitment for Life programme, raising many thousands of pounds over the years. Thank you for engaging with issues, retelling stories and praying for partners. Your gifts have made a real difference over the last 25 years but there is still so much more to do.

Lord God, We pray for this world you love so much
That you gave your only Son.
May His work of reconciliation be seen
In lives transformed
In situations transformed
In this and every land
So that the earth may be full of your glory.
Your Kingdom come!
Amen

2017 – YEAR OF ANNIVERSARIES FOR PALESTINE

We had a very interesting discussion at our Coffee Morning at the Manse at the beginning of February and I thought this article would give some useful background information for us all. Ed.

In May 1916, the Ottoman Empire was collapsing. Diplomats from the imperial powers, Sir Mark Sykes of Britain and Georges Picot of France, secretly carved out the Middle East region with an arbitrary 'line in the sand'. It became the basis of the League of Nations plan of July 1922 – with consequences still felt today.

It was the **Balfour Declaration of 2nd November 1917**, whose centenary will be marked this year that determined the fate of the people of Palestine, the land between the river Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea. Sir Arthur Balfour, the British Foreign Secretary, wrote to Lord Rothschild and stated that the British government views "with favour the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine ... it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine..."

It was a major triumph for Zionist diplomacy, since Jews in Palestine were less than 10% of the population, the majority being Arab. For Palestinians today, the Balfour Declaration marks the beginning of their 'century of suffering', but for Jewish people it is a landmark on the way to the creation of the State of Israel. At the time, the Balfour Declaration provoked considerable opposition among other prominent Jews in the UK and also among Jewish leaders in Jerusalem.

In the first week of November 1917, British forces finally defeated Ottoman forces in Gaza, entering Jerusalem in December 1917. They controlled Palestine through the British Mandate for 25 years. During those years, Jewish immigration began to increase dramatically and Britain, which had made conflicting promises to Jewish and Arab leaders, struggled to maintain control. **The Peel Commission report of 1937** was the first of several plans since then to divide the land between Jews and Palestinians.

In 1947, Britain was war-weary and the question of Palestine was taken to the United Nations, which devised a partition plan that assigned the greater part of the land to the Jewish minority. Resolution 181, the **UN Partition Plan of November 29th 1947**, remains a significant date for Palestinians but it was rapidly overtaken by events. Jewish fighters gained the upper hand and declared their 'Independence' with a new state on 15th May 1948 which they named Israel, on 78% of the whole land. The 'State of Israel' was granted UN membership a year later; Palestine's application has continued to be vetoed by the US ever since.

Mass immigration of Jewish refugees to Palestine, escaping the horrific events of the war years, was seen by many as a 'rightful' claim to their own land at a time of great persecution. "A land without a people for a people without a land" was a widely adopted Zionist slogan, even though the reality of centuries-long settled and indigenous people in Palestine was widely known. Almost three-quarters of a million Palestinians were forced out of their homeland in 1947 and 1948; many remain stateless, in refugee camps in neighbouring countries to this day. (See *'The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine'*, by the Israeli historian Ilan Pappé)

UNRWA, the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees was created in 1949 to deal with what was hoped would be a temporary problem. At the end of the **Six Day War in June 1967**, there were further expulsions of Palestinians as Israel wrested control from Jordan of the whole of the West Bank, including Jerusalem. **June 11th 2017 will mark 50 years of military occupation for the Palestinian people.**

For a few years the Oslo Peace Accords of 1993 onwards appeared to bring hope of a peaceful settlement, but the main issues of borders, Jerusalem, refugees and security were never finalized – and Israel expanded its West Bank settlements. Western powers repeatedly denounce Israel's settlements on Palestinian land as illegal, but are unwilling to go further and make Israel accountable. Serious peace proposals and offers from Palestinians and the Arab world have been ignored.

Ten years of Israel's blockade of Gaza will also be marked in June 2017. Hamas had won the national Palestinian election in 2006 but was largely confined to the Gaza Strip. Israel which had evacuated the small number of Jewish Israeli settlers from Gaza in August 2005, cooperated with Egypt in imposing a siege on Gaza which it denounced as being run by a 'terrorist group'. Since then, this once fertile and beautiful area of the land has been devastated by 3 major Israeli attacks, the last one in the summer of 2014. Gaza has a young population of almost 2 million people living in some of the worst conditions on earth. The UN has declared that without relief Gaza will become uninhabitable by 2020.

As we enter 2017 with a new US Presidency, the issue of Israel and Palestine and their future as two peoples living in the same

land remains bitterly divisive – not least among Jews in the United States, Britain and elsewhere. Their own long and fractured history has left its mark on the Palestinian people too. Palestinian Christians have appealed for support to fellow Christians through the Kairos Document of 2009. *'The General's Son'* by the Israeli writer Miko Peled is helpful in outlining the narratives of suffering of both peoples, which must be acknowledged if they are ever to live in harmony together.

The UK government will “neither celebrate nor apologise” for the Balfour Declaration said Foreign Office minister Tobias Ellwood in a parliamentary debate on 16th November 2016.

I believe that we should use this anniversary year to say that it is 'Time for Palestine' – for the second half of this Declaration to be implemented through recognition of the Palestinian people's right to independence and a secure homeland.

Margaret Derbyshire

Prayer

Living God, today we pray for all the people in Israel/Palestine, that they may discover the courage and humility to build peace together.

We pray for those with power and influence, that they will seek a just path of reconciliation.

We pray for those who are in dire need today, that their human rights to food and shelter and medical care will be urgently met.

We pray for international aid agencies as they work to bring hope to devastated communities.

We pray for all those in the land who have suffered over the years of struggle: for those who are grieving for their lost loved ones; for those whose lives have been changed forever because

of injuries, mental and physical; and for those who bear the lasting scars of being displaced and dispossessed.

Living God, their pain is so great today. Bring your healing, bring your peace, to Israel/Palestine.

For our Muslim brothers and sisters in Israel/Palestine this day, we pray *Assalamu Alaikum*.

For our Jewish brothers and sisters in Israel/Palestine this day, we pray *Shalom Aleichem*.

For our Christian brothers and sisters in Israel/Palestine, this day, we pray *The Peace of Christ*. Amen

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STORIES FOR CHANGE

Bangladesh

Christian Aid's advocacy work in Bangladesh has focused on global issues such as loss and damage from a gender perspective. At the national level, issues such as energy security, climate finance, climate justice and resilient livelihoods have been focused on. Christian Aid Bangladesh is an active member of many advocacy networks in Bangladesh. Through various national level events organised by these agencies, Christian Aid is linking its local level work with the advocacy initiatives at the national level. The Bangladesh programme is also well connected with global advocacy initiatives on climate change.

Christian Aid has adopted the Participatory Market System Development (PMSD) approach in its inclusive market development programming over the last year or so. It has reinforced the focus of its market work on various value chains like milk, chilli, maize, tea, and vegetables with 5,000 smallholder farmers/producers, 60% of whom are women. Since 2015, Christian Aid Bangladesh has been the chair of Market Development Forum (MDF) - a group of market development-practitioner organizations. Christian Aid has organized a number of sharing advocacy events at the national level in collaboration with MDF.

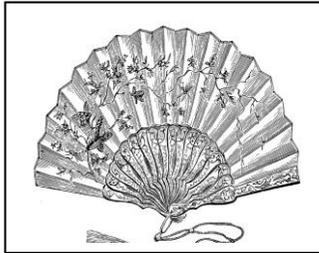
Christian Aid Bangladesh believes that women are the key to end poverty and therefore it places a focus on empowering women and girls. To this end, it has focused its gender work on gender mainstreaming over the last year. It has invested time in building

the capacity of programme staff, and has continued to provide formal and informal access to justice to women and men through engagement with BLAST (Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust) and local human rights organisation Nagorik Uddyog.

Through partnership with Research Development Collective (RDC), Christian Aid has continued its work with the plain land indigenous communities. It is still supporting the secretariat of Parliamentary Caucus on Indigenous People's Rights in Bangladesh which is a platform that advocates for the rights of indigenous people. Through this support they have built linkages with policy makers in Bangladesh. Work on social inclusion has also broadened with the implementation of various programmes on Dalit rights. Alongside Nagorik Uddyog, Christian Aid has trained Human Rights Defenders to ensure that the Dalit communities in Bangladesh have access to their rights and entitlements. The DHRDs are also ensuring that the victims of any kind of violence, based on caste and gender, are provided with legal aid and counselling thus ensuring access to justice for these communities.

Christian Aid Bangladesh achieved several milestones in 2016 in the implementation of humanitarian response work. For the first time it has mobilised local funding from UNDP to implement the Flood Recovery Resilient project. Christian Aid Bangladesh has successfully implemented two European funded emergency response and recovery projects in Northwest and Southeast Bangladesh, benefiting a total of 3,800 flood affected households. The project provided support for food security, water, sanitation and health, shelter, livelihoods and early recovery to affected

communities to enable them to return as quickly as possible to their normal lives.



EVER HEARD OF THE FAN MUSEUM?

Well, ever since reading an article about “best cream teas in London”, where the Fan Museum in London was very highly rated, for all the wrong reasons I thought I

would try and visit this museum, if only to put on yet more calories.

However, when I also saw that currently there is an exhibition of “**Biblical Fans**” I felt there could after all be a more spiritual excuse to visit. How glad I was to make the decision! Situated in “the heart of historic Greenwich”, at 12, Crooms Hill some five minutes’ walk from Cutty Sark DLR, the Fan Museum is to be found in a restored, listed Georgian townhouse, one of a terrace of exquisite Georgian townhouses at the base of the hill.

It is the only museum in the UK celebrating the history of fans and the craft of fan making. The collections exceed 5,000 objects and include fans dating from the 12th Century to the present day. I was awestruck by the delicacy, skill and detail of so many fans from around the world.

On the first floor are the exhibitions which change three times a year. At present the “Biblical Fans” exhibition is running (until 21st May) and displays some exquisite examples of fans depicting stories from both the Old and New Testament. The prophet

Elijah receiving bread from the widow, Moses crossing the waters, Ruth and Naomi, the Last Supper are just a few images that spring to mind in recalling this incredible collection. The artistry is just superb and the fans are displayed in large glass domes that you can walk round studying the detail closely. If you marvel at the great paintings in the National Gallery you will certainly be impressed to see works of great art confined to the half moon shape of the fan. By being displayed as they are in the glass cabinets you also can see the reverse of the fans, many of which have other illustrations on the back.

Then comes the Orangery at the rear of the building looking out from Palladian windows onto a small but again exquisite walled garden. The interior is covered in floral murals to compliment the garden itself and this is where you can have afternoon tea. Such a peaceful and genteel experience! And what beautiful scones and cakes!

There is also a gift shop with unusual, attractive and reasonably priced gifts all related to fans. I bought a craft kit to make a fan with my grandson Oliver - not sure how well we’ll get on somehow!

Anyway, take it from me that I really don’t think anyone would be disappointed in visiting. Catch the Central Line to Stratford, then take the DLR to Cutty Sark and within a few minutes you could be steeping yourself in grace and beauty. It’s closed on Mondays but open Tues-Saturday from 11am-5pm. It costs £4.00 for adults, £3 concessions. There is even free admission on Tuesdays for senior citizens from 2pm. If you are a National Trust member there is 50% discount too. Margaret Minoletti

CHINGFORD NEWS

Happy 100th Birthday Congratulations to John Griffiths, who celebrated his special birthday last month in the company of relatives, friends, neighbours and staff at Forest Place Nursing Home.

...he is the very model of a modern centenarian! – is how Richard described his father in his play on the well known words from The Pirates of Penzance. John still plays scrabble with the definite will to win – and has now had his skype equipment set up for him in his accommodation so that he can play with his grandson in Australia. John also very much welcomes visitors and hearing their news.

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

This is being held in our church this year on **Friday, 3rd March** at 2pm. Jane Mortimer would welcome offers of help with the lunch for the participants, (heating the food, serving drinks, and washing up afterwards). Donations of small cakes and biscuits are needed for refreshments. Please speak to Jane if you are to help in any way.



THE BIG BREW -

raising money for some of the world's poorest communities.

Friday 10th March 9.30 - noon

Come and join us at Chingford URC for tea or coffee. There will be cakes for sale and nearly new jewellery. You can also buy Traidcraft groceries and gifts.

2017 TABLE TENNIS CHALLENGE

For young and mature members of the congregation - please give your name to Richard Morris or Madeline. This is our second championship run, and we may be able to have a prize at the end of it this time!!

ART EXHIBITION & BOOK SALE

Our long awaited art exhibition/ competition and book sale was held on Saturday 11th February in the church and small hall. We saw some lovely art work from all ages and prizes were given to the winners. The theme was "Happiness" and visitors were impressed with the wide range of art work from childrens' collages (my family, dancing, mobile phone, warm bed) to cats and dogs, landscapes and a clock resembling a large Rubik's Cube. Visitors were asked to vote for their favourites and the competition results were very close on a vote of 64:

Winners

Unders 5s – Nathan Halliday (from St James) – 'Flowers'

6-10 years – Matilda Roney – 'Puppability'

11-14 years – Sebastian Roney – ‘Saved’
Adult – Helen Nursaw – ‘Nepalese Gentleman’

Pam Raworth ran workshops in which she taught people how to paint a card and Jane Mortimer had a seaside collage workshop with a prepared beach and sea scene on canvas, to which could be added shells, sea weed etc. Sandra Millan had a table for the young people to do their own collages.

Refreshments were served all day, including delicious soup at lunch time. The book sale was another attraction and was busy all day. Everyone worked hard to make it an enjoyable day. The amount raised was £337.

NOTES OF MEETINGS AT CHINGFORD

Elders Meeting 20th January 2017

- The Working Party for the Youth Outreach worker met and agreed that they were happy with progress of the Forest Group Youth Group; a meeting will be held with Red Balloon to see how we can continue working together
- The minutes of the Chingford Youth Council were circulated and elders accepted the recommendation that in future the uniformed organisations be invited to 4 of the 10 youth services in a year to try to improve attendance; these will be February Thinking day, July Church Picnic, September or October Harvest, December Christmas Gifts
- Heather reported that progress is being made on reviewing what needs to be done to resubmit an application for the church to be recognised as a Child Friendly Church
- Malcolm Smith has been in contact with the Revd Derek Lingfield the new Synod Safeguarding officer and has supplied the Church's safeguarding policy and details of

co-ordinator and link persons. He has also highlighted the problem round clearing elders under the DBS arrangements

- On 12th February Richard Mortimer will be dedicating George Mills, grandson of Madeline, and ordaining Jacqui Stolar as an Elder
- Richard has been asked to provide worship experience for a TLS student, Frank Attah Dankwah before the end of June.
- Lent Bible studies will be taking place at St James URC on Monday mornings and evenings and a CTINC bible study will probably also be arranged at Chingford.
- Ulrike said she was happy to receive training requests from elders in addition to the Holy Communion training already being organised
- Revd Jane Mortimer is leading World Day of Prayer at Chingford at 2pm on Friday March 3rd. A congregation of about 50 is expected.

Informal Church Meeting held on January 22nd

- There was discussion involving those who had looked round the Woodford Green church buildings on Jan 21st and those who hoped to attend the Forest Group Day on Jan 28th. Our views will be passed on at that meeting.

Church Meeting 12th February attended by 16 members, 4 apologies, Richard in Chair

- Minutes of previous four Meetings were agreed and signed.
- We noted that the financial result for 2016 was a surplus of £14,475, which was much better than expected and was

due to a number of factors, which increased income and reduced expenditure.

- The budget for 2017 currently shows a surplus of £7,660 and church members are asked to comment where they think income is too optimistic or expenditure is too pessimistic. £5,000 is included for repairs and if this is not sufficient the above surplus can be used to finance other works.
- In the light of the above surplus in 2016, we reviewed our Ministry and Mission contribution for 2017 and agreed to give an extra £2,160 as a one off payment, which would increase the figure for the year from £23,496 to the previous level of £26,656, one of the options previously suggested by Synod officers.
- We also agreed to give £100 from the Christmas Eve collection to “Street Child” the charity being supported by the Forest Group Youth Group
- We reviewed the list of payments given to charities prepared by Duncan and noted that some charities received less than others. We agreed to cease monthly retiring collections in October, when we are collecting money for the 1% appeal and shoe boxes and also in December when there are other special collections such as Christmas Card charity collection, Christmas gifts for the homeless, Christmas Eve collection, and Ministers’ Widows and Orphans fund collection on Christmas Day. We agreed to retain the list of 12 charities as it is but have retiring collections for these on the remaining 10 months, so the collections will be completed over a 14 month cycle. This will gradually change the time of year that the collection is made for each charity, which should benefit some charities.

- We agreed the recommendation from Andrew Wiseman that the production of accounts be simplified by preparing on a receipts and payments basis, which means including only receipts and payments that fall in the year and not including unpaid bills or income not yet paid. A note could be put in the accounts about items not accrued.
- We considered a proposal from the Forest Group that the Chingford church news should be amalgamated with the Forest Group News. We agreed that as far as possible the whole of the Chingford news will be included in the Forest Group News and that we will order sufficient copies for all active church attenders (40). We will still have the Chingford news as a separate item for those where the Forest Group news is not appropriate, e.g. uniformed organisations and hirers of the premises.
- The Church Secretary took the chair for discussion on the Manse. The board of management was given authority to do what is necessary for the letting of the manse when it is vacated.
- The Board of Management has been looking at outstanding repairs. It is also suggested that there be a further working party day to complete items that were not dealt with last time. Health and safety issues must be addressed.
- A meeting was held with the Cleaning contractor to review the cleaning contract. The B of M is also reviewing the refuse collection contract.
- Malcolm Allard briefly reported on letting issues; some hirers are reducing their hours.
- News of the Church Family – John Griffiths had a 100th birthday party last Monday. Prayers were requested for Janet Lewis who is currently in hospital.

HIGHAMS PARK NEWS

Prayer Partners

Pam Bernice Helen Richard
Francis Kay Lorraine Margaret
Valerie Ken

Please speak to your prayer partner and see if there are any specific things they would like to pray for. Or if possible, why not arrange a time to pray together during the month. Please also pray for past members and friends.

If you would like a Prayer Partner please let Helen know so that you can be added to the list.

Happy Birthday greetings go to Vivian on 5th, Michael for his 20th birthday on 23rd and Natalie on 30th March.

Women's World Day of Prayer

Friday 3rd March 10.30 am at All Saints Church, Highams Park.
Written by Women of the Phillippines.
Everyone welcome – not just women!

LOVE KNITTING OR CROCHETING?

We have received a plea for help from Linda Mead, the Programme Co-ordinator for Commitment for Life. She is looking for knitters or crocheters (individual or church craft groups) to do a project for the URC at Greenbelt, the Christian Art festival, in August. If you are such a person or know of a group, could you please email her at lmeadcforl@gmail.com as soon as possible.

LENT LUNCHES



At Ray Lodge United Reformed Church

On Wednesdays

12 noon – 1.30 pm

22nd and 29th March,

5th and 12th April

at Ray Lodge Church

(8th and 15th March

at St Barnabas Church)

Soup, bread and butter, cheese, and tea/coffee

£3.00 proceeds to Christian Aid

ST. JAMES' CHURCH MEETING NOTES JANUARY 2017

Our January Meeting was chaired by Revd. Richard Mortimer, and was attended by twelve people. Before the meeting began we stood in memory of Audrey Forrest, who had died on 11th December.

We began by exchanging news of the church family before moving on to other matters. All the pre-Christmas events had gone well with £277 being raised for Redbridge Single Homeless Project from our carol singing at Buckhurst Hill Station, considerably more than last year. The New Year Party on 15th January had been attended by eighteen people and was much appreciated. The pre-Christmas Commuter Outreach at the station had gone well with three of our members helping. Hopefully the pre-Easter Outreach will go ahead as planned, despite the station office now not always being open.

The next Churches Together Meeting will be held at the Baptist Church when members of the Pentecostal Church which now meets in St. Stephen's Church should be present.

We will again be supporting WaterAid's *Jars of Change Appeal* during Lent and this year WaterAid will be focussing on Madagascar where even young children have to walk 3km twice daily to obtain clean water.

We will be having a Fair Trade Coffee Morning on Tuesday 14th March in the church Room, so please support it if you can. There

will be a Traidcraft stall in the foyer run by Lena Wright from Chingford URC.

We will be having a Forest Group Quiet Day at St. James' on Maundy Thursday, 13th April and a Meditation in the Church Room on Good Friday, led by the Worship Group.

Members were reminded to keep collecting used postage stamps for The Leprosy Mission. An amazing £148,000 had been collected from the sale of such stamps for their funds in 2016.

Margaret Minoletti is planning an exciting Harvest Weekend with a Barn Dance and Harvest Supper on 23rd September, to which local allotment holders will be invited to bring some of their produce, and there will be opportunities for local schoolchildren to join in as well.

Keith White from Mill Grove, where our Christmas gifts went this year, will be leading our morning service on 22nd October, so lots of things to look forward to in the coming year, which of course is the URC's year of *Feasts and Festivals* – a special year for the church in many ways.

Isabel Bala

ST JAMES' PRAYER PARTNERS

Val - Louise, Margaret M. – Steven, Isabel - Marisa,
Diane – Graham , Kathleen T. – Eileen

*Loving God, make me fit to serve you.
You love me when I am not worthy of your love.
You call me even when I am reluctant to hear.
You choose me when no-one else sees my worth.*

*You seek me when I go astray.
You wait for me when I mark time.
Reassure me when my faith grows weak.*

*You hear me in my anguished cry
And cover me when my heart is afraid.*

*I don't know why you have chosen me.
I don't know why you entrust me with words from you,
But I know that you are faithful to me, constant and unwavering.
So make me worthy of your claim on my life,
Willing to stand in praise of you,
And fit to serve according to your will.*

Karen Campbell