



the magazine

FOR all of us, as long as life shall last, November 11th, 1918, will live in our memories.

Has any day seen a change so stupendous between its opening and its closing hours? We woke under the grievous and long-sustained burden of war; we lay down at night in certain knowledge that the terrible slaughter had ended, in freedom from anxiety concerning loved ones, and in hope of a dawning Peace.

Park Church Magazine – November 1918

Park united reformed church

November 2018

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Secretary's Letter

Dear friends,

I am writing to you as we wait to board the Aurora. As many of you know Carole and I are off to visit Greece and the Greek islands. Hopefully the weather will be a bit warmer. As I say we are waiting to board. The usual system of arriving at the port and going straight on board has failed this time due to a mechanical fault with the air bridge. I am sure something will be sorted soon. It seems that in many things in life don't always work as planned or hoped. We just have to be patient and trust in those who are sorting things out for us.

While we are away at sea you will be commemorating Remembrance Day and the 100 years since the conclusion of hostilities in World War 1.

On November the 11th I will be on Gibraltar. During the Second World War my father served in the Royal Navy and there were a lot of occasions when his vessel was docked there. He also took part in the relief of Malta and I can remember him telling me of times escorting convoys there and also the times that they were moored in Valletta. We will be visiting Malta too.

So I do have reasons to remember not only my father but all those who served in the Armed services and the sacrifices they made to provide the freedoms we have today. I will be sorry not to be with you this year.

Earlier this month I attended the Synod meeting. The Ministries and Learning group share some information about the current size of the Synod. This might give some perspective on the problem of supplying ministry both now and the future.

Within Wessex Synod there are 130 Churches (including LEPS). There are 5500 members, this gives an average of about 40 members per church. It is calculated that it takes about 140 members to Support a minister eg about 3.5 churches.

There is not enough money to support more ministers as the size of the churches continues to diminish. The days of one minister per church have gone.

Is the solution of one minister supporting 2 or more churches the best way forward?

What about a team of ministers looking after a larger group of churches?

I don't know the answer to these questions.

As the URCs form of governance relies on the local church meeting, how do we get local Church Meetings to work together?

Park has been in the position of having a single minister all to themselves for over 110 years. It is quite difficult for us to understand anything else.

At this time we need to pray very hard for God to lead us forward. Things need to change but God is good at change and I know that he has great plans for us.

I look forward to seeing you all on my return.

God bless and love to you all from both of us.

Roger.

Back with The Fold, Embracing The New

Gosh it's hard to believe I have been in my new job as Centre Manager for two months already! Where has the time gone?! I absolutely love it! I have previous experience in managing buildings, company finances and hosting events, so to be in a position where I get to combine these things plus play an active role in enabling our beloved church to increase revenue and decrease aged debt (by chasing old invoices overdue for payment) really is giving me the best of both worlds! Yvette is a great manager, Roger is so incredibly helpful and so many of you have offered advice and guidance – thank you!

Some of you may have seen Issy come in to work with me after school. It's so important to teach children the value of both money and hard work – so seeing her show interest in my job is another positive aspect. At least once a week I save up the messages on the answering machine so she can press the red delete button! You may also have noticed Issy has coloured in the box in the office which has the bibles in!

As I only work circa 15 hours a week, I may not be in the office when you need me. Please feel free to email me at any time. You can also put a note in my in-tray if you have any queries or concerns. If you are in at the same time as me, please pop in and see me!

It's also hard to fathom that I have now been back at Park for just over two years. On one hand the time has gone ridiculously quickly, but on the other it feels like I never left. The beauty of this place is whilst it is forever changing, it still holds dear the things I loved when I was a child – the focus around family; the care we show each other; the comments from new visitors about what a warm 'feel' the premises has, oh and we do like to have a celebration too!

During Frances and Tim Lancaster's service last weekend we welcomed Steve Bullard as a church member. I felt overcome with emotion for him when he explained to us all so openly how the power of prayer brought him peace and I wish him much love and happiness in his journey of faith and life.

A few of us recently worked hard to put together a two day holiday club during October half term. It was incredibly satisfying to see so many children attend the event. Judith tirelessly worked hard behind the scenes promoting the event and organising activities. Henry was our 'DIY and IT Hero' – he converted Issy's old wardrobe in to a shop which we can use to

sell gifts in the future and I hope it will make an appearance at the Christmas Fair! Henry also turned David's Hall in to a cinema so we could all sit down and watch a film each afternoon. Helen Durrant was a massive help with the Henna Beads and we had Charlee Foale and Rene Ewing working hard in the kitchen putting together refreshments and lunches and they did a tremendous job clearing up at the end of each session.

There were several other helpers too and we are so incredibly grateful for your help – thank you so much. I believe this is something we are going to continue in to 2019, which will not just help bring in money to the church but will also benefit the local community and bring people together.

For me, there are so many things I feel grateful to God for over the last few years. Being back in regular contact with Helen, Jenny, Simon and Joan is without a doubt one of the greatest blessings for me. I have also made some wonderful new friends who I know I will be friends with for a lifetime. Yet what I find most extraordinary is the impact this church and the people have had on Issy. Issy talks about Park, her church friends, God and Jesus to her friends and family with such pride and excitement and for me I know undoubtedly this was a major part of His Plan. So here's to the future! With all my love,

Becky Jemmott

Traidcraft

Many thanks to those who supported the recent Traidcraft stall I had after church for the last 2 Sundays, which raised £155.

I will next have a larger stall with Christmas items on the 24th November at the Christmas Fayre.

Gaye

Reverse Advent Calendar

I am so looking forward to Advent when I can buy and prepare lots of gifts and food for family and friends and think about the giving of the greatest gift of all. But what I'm also looking forward to is taking art again in the Reverse Advent Calendar.

You may remember that over the last couple of years, Nomad House Group have set up a collection based on the idea that, instead of receiving a small chocolate or a short Bible verse every day, we can give something every day.

There are many people in Reading that are already worried about the approaching festive season. How am I going to feed my family basic food, let alone Christmas dinner? How can I give my children the chocolate and cake treats that other families will be enjoying? How are we going to keep our house and clothes clean, never mind have a special bubble bath? How can I possibly set aside some money for gifts, when I haven't even got enough money for the essentials?

So from mid-November to mid-December, we will be putting one item in a box every day and then bringing them in to church Sunday by Sunday, then collect them all together and take them down to ReadiFood. Would you like to join us? Just bring in your item(s) on a Sunday and add them to the pile at the front of the church.

Apart from the usual foods – tinned veg and fish, tea and coffee, etc. – some seasonal necessities would be good like custard, gravy powder, Christmas pudding and mince pies, plus some extra treats like Christmas crackers, chocolates and fancy soft drinks, and also some things that could be used by families themselves or as gifts like nice bubble bath and shower gel.

Whatever you manage to give – whether it be one item, or several – it will all go to make someone's Christmas a lot happier than it would have been without!

Carrie

The United Reformed Website: 5 Minutes Peace

Grab a cuppa. Settle down in a comfy chair. Let yourself have 5 Minutes' Peace...

... To yourself away from the chaos of life. To relax. To reflect. To meet with God....

Blinded by Your Grace

Read John 1: 12-14

Listen to the song "Blinded By Your Grace Pt.2 by Stormzy.

In this song, Grime artist Stormzy talks about the ways in which God has fixed and transformed his life.

Like many Grime albums, Stormzy's music may appear to some, at first listen, to be quite aggressive, boastful and messy. There's a reason for that. The world can be a difficult place to be in, especially for those who are so often ignored, neglected or misunderstood. Grime music is one avenue which some people chose to assert themselves, vent their feelings and express their identity.

Behind the rough exterior, though, it doesn't take long to find concepts and values vital to human thriving. Family, compassion, solidarity, perseverance, and, of course, faith in the lyrics and rhymes which Grime artists share.

Through his words, Stormzy sums up the Christian message. Whoever we are, whatever our background, whatever we've done, wherever we're headed, whether we're the first born or one of many, find ourselves fulfilled or broken, raring to go or tired and unworthy, God loves us. If we trust God, God will use the gifts and talents we've been given to help us rise from the ashes of our troubles to know reassurance, comfort and hope once again.

Stormzy's words haven't been written for worship. They haven't been formed in a factory purely to make money. They come straight from the heart of a young man, his friends and colleagues, who have experienced God in times of struggle, giving us much to reflect on and be inspired by.

Have you ever felt broken? Have you ever felt unworthy? How did you react? Where was God in those times? What gifts and talents were you able to call on as you sought a way out of your struggles? How might we better recognise and trust the presence of Gods to help[us in times of trial?

Bed for the Night

Wycliffe Baptist Church are considering offering Sunday nights using The Warehouse (this is a big hall that is self-contained around the corner from them) as a room for client's who would otherwise be homeless and sleeping on the streets.

This would mean opening at 7.30pm until 10.30pm with all client's leaving by 9.00am in the morning. The beds and bedding are then taken onto the next church on the list but organised separately.

It is hoped that 7 churches would be involved, mostly in the centre of Reading but because one church cannot cover for 2019 Wycliffe are prayerfully considering offering their premises. A different church hosts for one night a week and in 2019 they are hoping to run for 3 months from January to March.

However, in order for Wycliffe to go ahead for the Sunday night which is the night that needs to be covered, they wish to know if there are volunteers within CTEER who would assist with making the evening meal, promoting activities in the evening/talking and listening/playing table tennis, and then assisting with breakfast the following day.

If you are interested in helping out any of the churches involved but particularly Wycliffe via a rota system in order that the service can be offered for 7 days of the week. Please contact Jill Bird directly on sandjbird@gmail.com or contact Gaye if you were able to assist with any other church on another night.

You don't have to do the evening and the morning. If you can offer to help in any way that is all that is required at this stage.

Light Party – in pictures

The Light Party – Park's positive alternative to the numerous darker Halloween parties...



...and a great time was had by all!

pictures by **Paul Street**

Home for Good

At a recent meeting with CTEER (Churches Together in Earley and East Reading) Bethany Hare was asked to come and speak as she represents 'Home for Good'. This is a summary of her talk.

Bethany explained to CTEER that she was a social worker but felt compelled to work for Home for Good knowing how many children were in care. She gave us some figures e.g. 4000 are waiting for be adopted and 8000 foster families were needed. 90 children a week in the UK will come into care.

She explained how those who did not have a good start in life or stability were more likely to leave education early and third would become homeless.

There is a particular need for foster carers for those who are 16+ and a payment is made to foster parents who can offer a bedroom. That is one of the criteria which is proving difficult as many people do not have a spare bedroom.

Those without knowledge of a good family life are more likely to turn to drugs which we know is an issue and have mental health problems.

Within churches children are accepted and can be shown a different way of life to that they have experienced before.

The success of Home for Good in placing children with Christians from churches has been such that RBC who were rather sceptical have now seen the good results with the work and children leading and having experience of family life.

Other councils in neighbouring Wokingham, West Reading and Bracknell are now asking for their assistance and unlike before are welcoming Christians as carers.

Christmas time becomes very difficult for families and more children are removed to care during this time.

How we can help? Find out if anyone is fostering or adopting in your church and speak to them about their experiences. There are many ways to help from being a respite carer e.g. once a week meet a child from school and give them dinner/play with them.

Foster carers who maybe just want to cover emergency needs for 2-3 days or who want to give long term care. Whatever help you an offer will help a child in some way.

There is support and Reading Family church have toys and clothes for short time foster parents. Brookside have a stay and play breakfast for carers and children to give support.

For adoption the criteria are quite simple. You can be single or married, over 21 but you must have a spare bedroom. The assessment process for adoption is still 6-9 months.

If anyone would like to speak to Bethany either about coming to speak at your church or about the different ways of caring for a child please contact her on

Bethany.hare@homeforgood.org.uk.

Gaye

URC backs call to help fix Universal Credit

The United Reformed Church (URC) joined 14 food poverty charities and church leaders in urging the government to create a £2 billion budget investment to help fix Universal Credit.

On 16 October a letter was hand delivered to Theresa May, the Prime Minister, and Philip Hammond, Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging them to take action and fix the policy.

The signatories – including Mr Derek Estill, Moderator of the URC General Assembly, Faireshare, the Trussell Trust, Church Action on Poverty, and the Child Poverty Action group – all members of the End Hunger UK campaign (a coalition that has a vision of a UK where everyone has access to good food, and nobody has to go to bed hungry), said in the letter: ‘We all rely on the welfare safety net being there for us in times of financial stress or hardship.

‘But for many, Universal Credit is currently failing in that task. In areas where it has been rolled out, foodbanks and other food aid providers report an increase in demand, with more people pushed into debt, destitution and hunger as a result of delays, errors, a lack of flexibility, and inadequate support.

'We still believe that there is an opportunity to fix Universal Credit to prevent more people going hungry. As a matter of urgency, we would encourage you to:

- Reinvest in Universal Credit, by committing at least an additional £2 billion in the forthcoming Budget to reverse cuts and freezes
- Act to improve the flexibility and support for people on Universal Credit.
- Make improvements to Universal Credit, to ensure it does not leave more people at risk of debt and destitution.
- Make a long-term commitment to ensure Universal Credit provides people with enough income to afford good food on a regular basis.'

Mr Niall Cooper, Director of Church Action on Poverty, added: 'It is not right that a welfare policy is currently dragging many people into deeper poverty and hunger. We need urgent government action and investment to redress this.'

The call was issued ahead End Hunger UK's conference in Westminster, where charities, emergency food providers and people with direct experience of food poverty set out their vision for a society in which everyone has access to good food and discuss potential policies to make that a reality.

The charities, and local churches within which many food banks are based, have heard many stories of Universal Credit leading to debt, destitution and hunger, including people waiting months for their first payment.

The specific recommendations for action to fix Universal Credit are based on feedback from more than 70 frontline food aid organisations who have seen at first hand the impact that the rollout of Universal Credit has had on the people they support on a daily or weekly basis.

Lakeside Songs of Praise Dates for 2018

Everyone is welcome to join us at Lakeside Care Home for these Songs of Praise Services from 2.30 – 3.30 pm •

- Wednesday 14th November
- Wednesday 12th December

Please sign in at the Care Home reception desk on arrival.

Julia Marsh

Update on Visiting Preachers during Vacancy

Thank you so much to all who have helped or are helping me to fill the slots in the visiting preachers' list. I can't believe that we have now been in vacancy for over 15 months and how quickly this year is passing – the details below lead up to Christmas and beyond!

Please see below the updated list of preachers who will lead morning worship over the next two months. We continue to have a wonderful variety of people making our services so interesting.

- 4th November: Rev Ray Stanyon
- 11th November: Carrie & Rod King
- 18th November: Rebecca Bullard
- 25th November: Peter Ferguson
- 2nd December: Rev Mark Laynesmith
- 9th December: Elizabeth & Alistair Knox
- 16th December: Judith Enang
- 23rd December: Michael Penny
- 25th December: Roger Clark
- 30th December: Simon King

The 2019 Pulpit Plan is starting to fill up nicely as well but there are still plenty of spaces. If you would like to lead a service or be involved in any way, or know of anyone else who might be interested to help, then please speak to Roger or me.

Julia Marsh

Just Around the Corner (JAC) Update

From 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018, JAC has delivered 1809 sessions to children and young people at our Rehoboth site. Our detached team also go out on an average of 3 sessions per week and within this past year came into contact with over 800 young people, as well as the schools work, which delivered over 400 sessions (on a 1:1 and group basis).

We are very blessed to have such a dedicated team of staff, faithful volunteers as well as churches & organisations that help support us to support children and young people, and there are further volunteer roles that we are particularly in need of at present:

- Sessional workers to undertake 1:1 mentoring with children and young people. We have a variety of different areas in which mentors can work, including: arts & crafts, horticulture, small animals, pottery & equine
- Volunteer cleaner/s to help keep our site clean and tidy for the young people to enjoy it
- Horticulture/Gardening/Site Maintenance to help on the general upkeep of Rehoboth around the site and on our grounds.

Anxiety Workshop for Parents

Woodley Community Youth Partnership is running workshops for parents on learning and awareness of anxiety in children and young people . On Wednesday 7 November 2018 or Thursday 8 November 2018 From: 7.30 – 9.00pm At: the Alan Cornish Theatre in the Oakwood Centre Headley Road, Woodley RG5 4JZ

Both workshops are free of charge. Places are limited to 60 at each event. To book a place at one of the workshops please email: office@jacoutreach.org or phone 0118 9441444 and give your name and contact details. Your details given for this purpose will not be retained by Just Around the Corner (JAC) once the workshops have taken place.

URC Book Sales

Reform, Bread of Life, Fresh From Work, URC Handbook

If you would like any of these for 2019 please see the list on the notice board and add your name. I am happy to organise for you and you can pay me when they are in.

However with Reform I have to receive the money in advance which is the same as last year £28.50 but the digital version will be £18. I need to know how many people will need by the 18th November to enable you to receive at these prices.

New members and new Elders will be entitled to a free copies for 3 issues. Please see me if you would like to receive.

Gaye

Reading/Dusseldorf Exchange

There will be an information meeting on 23rd November at St Stephen's and St Orts at 7.30pm to discuss 'What part the churches play' with the twinning association.

There is a poster with full details on the noticeboard and a bring and share meal beforehand if you are able to attend.

Contact laurie.haseler@btinternet.com if you need more details.

Martyn Joseph - In Concert at All Saints Church

Martyn Joseph is an award-winning guitar player who has built his reputation as a mesmerising live performer. His songs are fuelled by faith and social justice and he is a regular at the Greenbelt festival.

Martyn has toured with the likes of Jools Holland, Art Garfunkel and Celine Dion (to name a few). As part of a UK tour to promote his new album 'Here Come The Young', Martyn is playing All Saints church in Wokingham on Friday, November 30. For tickets and more details, go to 'What's On' at www.wokinghamconcerts.co.uk

WW1 100 Years on – a reflection

Almost no-one alive today grew up in the First World War, yet few of us are without its effects upon our lives. Global politics bear its influence; national life is punctuated with its memorials; family stories include tales of this relative's permanent damage, or that one's derring-do.

And for some of us of later generations it holds a fascination that hovers between respectful honour and repulsed horror. In truth, we live in the shadows of that conflict, which ended one hundred years ago.

Shadowlands are awesome places. They can at once be eerie, yet also inspiring. Shot through with grief, suffering and despair, shadowlands can be suffocating. Yet, often at the same time, they can be moments when service beyond the call of duty and love beyond the uttermost penetrate the gloom and intimate hope.

It would be wrong if this centenary did not find us lingering in the shadowlands of sadness.

We cannot recall that war without prayers of penitence that humanity let such things happen. Then and now, prayers of pleading that we learn to study war no more, and prayers of compassion for those whose lives bear its scars.

At the same time, the 100th anniversary of the armistice can launch us into celebration as we recognise that war is not the default position of human relations, but peace is. It's peace we long for and peace we strive for.

When Matthew records Jesus' Beatitudes, peacemakers are amongst the blessed. There is a tacit acceptance that war happens, otherwise there would be no need for peacemakers, but also that serious engagement with ideas about God sets us on a path to peace.

Rev. Nigel Uden, Moderator of the URC General Assembly



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currently in vacancy

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Church Website: www.parkurc.org.uk

Our church website is updated regularly and has details of the many activities of the Church. You will also find some of the charities that we support, with links to even more helpful websites.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ParkURC?ref=aymt_homepage_panel

Regular Activities at Park

Sunday	10.30 am	Worship Young people's groups & Crèche facilities Holy Communion (1st Sunday)
	3.00 pm	Messy Church (1st Sunday of the Month)
	3.45 pm	Newlife Celebration Tamil Church
	6.30 pm	Ignite Coffee & Cakes (in term-time)
	7:00 pm	Ignite Worship (in term-time)
Monday	Various	Read Dance & Theatre College
	9.30 am	Park Mother & Toddlers Group
	5.15 pm	Beaver Scouts
	6.45 pm	Cub Scouts
Tuesday	7.30 pm	Housegroup
	Various	Read Dance & Theatre College
	10:00 am	Happy Feet Footcare (every 6 weeks)
	10.30 am	Fitness Pilates
	1.00 pm	Cranberry College (Sept-Mar term time)
	2.15 pm	Friendship Club
	2:00 pm	Reading U3A Yoga (every 2 weeks)
	7:30 pm	Earley Folk Dancing
	7.30 pm	Badminton Club (Sept – March)
	7.30 pm	Housegroup
Wednesday	8.15 pm	Aldbrickham Clog & Dance Group
	Various	Read Dance & Theatre College
	9.00 am	Morning Prayers
	9:30 am	Embroiderers' Guild (monthly)
	10.00 am	Park 60+ Exercise (12 noon seated session)
	12.00 pm	Reading Lunchtime Choir
	2.00 pm	Reading Macular Society (bi-monthly)
	5.00 pm	Beavers
Thursday	7.00 pm	Scouts
	Various	Read Dance & Theatre College
	9:45 am	Tuneful Tales
	10.30 am	Reading MenCap
	2.00 pm	U3A Madrigal Society (every 2 weeks)
	2.00 pm	Active Living Tai Chi
	2:00 pm	Reading Abbey Trefoil Group (4th Thurs of month)
	5:30 pm	Brownies
	5.30 pm	Rainbows
	7.15 pm	Guides
Friday	7.30 pm	Housegroup
	Various	Read Dance & Theatre College
	9.45 am	Zumba Fitness Class
Saturday	6.30pm	Pilots
	9.00 am	The Allenova Ballet School
	9.30am	Reading Seventh Day Adventist Community Group
	10.00	Parenthesis Choir
	4.00pm	Reading Community Gospel Choir

