



the magazine



Park united reformed church

Christmas 2021

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The views expressed in this magazine are those of the individual contributors, and do not necessarily represent the views of Park United Reformed Church, nor those of the editor.

The Minister's Letter

Dear Family,

I am starting where I ended the last letter by giving my own answer to the question of HOPE.

For me HOPE lights the path of faith we walk together in life.

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light for my path
– Psalm 119:105 NIV

The news and circumstances that surround us in this world can be dark. BUT, we have a light in the darkness – Jesus Light of the World!

This Christmas, we are reminded to keep our eyes on Jesus: the Child born to us!

Our ruler, given to us by God called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Eternal Father and Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6)

The saying “Many hands make light work...” came to mind. I saw this come into action as we set up, many people came together to ensure the decorations were hanging just right!

The Scouts, Guides and Rainbows were on hand to help too, decorating the tree in the hall.

I was able to hear the sounds of laughter, conversations and a choir singing “Born is the King, the King of Israel!” a beautiful cacophony of sound, a holy noise!



Special thanks to ALL who made this year's Christmas Fair so very special!

I am so grateful for all that we have been able to do together this year, since May 23rd we have gathered together in a HYBRID format both in-person and online and worshipped the living God!

We have shared fellowship through food, stories, tears, smiles and laughter - for all this and more we are grateful!

Throughout the year I feel we have been pointed towards the Hope. The hope we have especially when it seems darkest, hope where there is no hope at all...

We have a hope in Christ.

Tolu and I wish you, your families and all those you hold dear a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Stephen

Family News

We give thanks to God for our successful Christmas Fair, held at the end of November, rejoicing that so many people came, many of them visiting our church for the first time. We thank all those who helped in any way to make the day a success and ask for God's blessing on the money that was raised to enable us to donate to our chosen charities at Christmas.

Gaye Rees would like to thank everyone who supported the Fair Trade/Traidcraft Stall at the Christmas Fair, or who ordered items in advance. £148 was raised for the charity, and we give thanks for all that Gaye and Ray do to encourage support for this very worthwhile cause.

We send our very best wishes to Doreen Durrant, who moved just over a week ago to her new home in Lymington, where she will be near Helen and Tony. It has been a privilege to have Doreen as part of our church fellowship again in recent years and we shall miss her. We send love to Doreen and to all the family.

We congratulate Megan Longdon, one of our Scout leaders, who has been selected to lead one of two units from Berkshire at the 2023 World Scout Jamboree in Korea. Mick Stocks was on the selection panel and tells us that there will be over 40,000 Scouts attending from around the world. This is an honour for Megan, and for 73rd Reading (Park) Scouts. We are pleased to note that they continue to be at the forefront of local Scouting.

We pray for those who mourn, including our minister, Stephen, and his family, following the recent death of Stephen's uncle; Dulcie Sims, following the death of her sister Christine; and Bev Warden and her family – Bev's nephew Andrew died suddenly in his sleep at the age of 43.

We ask that God will strengthen and uphold them and their families during the coming days.

We continue to pray for Janet Howes as she recovers from hip replacement surgery; for Maureen Plummer, who is also recovering having had a surgical procedure on her back; and for Ruth Clark, following a procedure on her foot.

We think of all those affected in any way in the fire in Grovelands Road, Reading, and pray that the community can come together to support all those in need.

It has been good to see Linda Adkins out and about, and with us in church again. Her son Jim and his wife Carol have asked if they can pass on their thanks to everyone at Park for their many prayers over the past months, which have been a huge source of comfort to them all.

We remember Vera Bacon, who has spent time in hospital following a fall. Vera is now home, and we send her our love and prayers. We also pray for Sylvia Wise, who has had an urgent CT scan. We pray that God's healing hand will bring comfort to Sylvia and her family at this worrying time.

We pray for all others known to us who are affected by ill-health, recovering from, or receiving treatment, remembering in particular Michael and Elizabeth Jackson; Rose Byatt and her daughter Chris; Renne and Bert Ewen; James O'Neill; Janet Howes; Paul and Sally Street; Linda Adkins; Steven Ballard; and Thelma Butler.

From Hungerford we pray for Fiona and all her family, including her daughter Hanna; Dennis and Sally Cryer; Nelish Gohil; Daphne Priestley; Suzanne Stimpson; Katherine Bossom; and Chris Cragg and her son Andy, who is to undergo surgery this week for the removal of his kidney.

Lord, in your mercy Hear our Prayer

Carrie

The Church Organ

The church organ is now in its correct location, and the speakers are in place too.



Christmas at Park – in pictures

This year we thought that we would attempt to capture a flavour of the Christmas season at Park in a series of pictures.

Many thanks to all our photographers.

Stephen, Alan & Rod

1) Putting up the Christmas Decorations

They say 'many hands make light work', but in the case of the Christmas trees, it's more 'many hands make the lights work'!







2) the 2021 Christmas Fair







3) December Messy Church

So many children, so many great activities to do!





Very many thanks to all our helpers.



... a whole flock of sheep made for the Church Nativity Scene!



...and, as ever, our thanks to the Messy Church Catering Team!



4) the Friendship Club Christmas Play

A Christmas play with Zechariah, Elizabeth, Mary and Joseph □



5) the Recycling Nativity

This year we constructed a full Nativity scene made entirely from recycled materials.









Judging by the comments and the smiles, it seems to have been particularly enjoyed by travellers at the bus stop and children passing on their way to school!

6) the Candlelight Service

After all the interruptions to the Christmas programme last year, it was wonderful to welcome the return to Park of a much loved tradition.





The Cowshed - Our Gift Service Charity

A charity supporting people in times of personal crisis has launched a Christmas appeal for presents to give to children and single adults this year.



The Cowshed is asking the public, community and local businesses to support the appeal by donating new gifts.

For children, the gifts are then collected into individual sacks made from Christmas fabric by the charity's team of craft volunteers. Each contains one main present, two smaller presents, a reading book or colouring book and pens, a chocolate selection pack and some stocking fillers.

Through its Christmas project, the charity also supports single adults, including care leavers with little or no family support, and the local homeless community, by providing them with a single gift.

This is the second year the appeal has been run, with the charity giving out 1,200 sacks last year.

This year the numbers have increased, with the charity already receiving more than 1,800 referrals for children's sacks and more than 400 referrals for single adults.

Rebecca Mole, fundraising co-ordinator, said: "This year the numbers are so very high and we've had a lot of support but not enough and stocks are running very low so we are reaching out as much as we can."

The charity welcomes any new toy donations, including books, colouring books and colouring pens, suitable for all ages.

She added: "It just eases the financial burden on these families because Christmas is obviously a very highly pressured time."

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