



# *the* magazine



**Park** united reformed church

**February 2022**

## **Inside the magazine this month...**

The Minister's Letter.....	3
Family News.....	5
Feedback from Church Meeting.....	6
Christian Aid Appeal – Christmas 2021 .....	9
Church Secretary's Overview of 2020 and 2021 .....	10
Rainbows .....	15
30 <sup>TH</sup> Reading Brownies.....	16
1st Earley Guides and Rangers.....	17
30th Reading Guides.....	18
Why I am not a Humanist. ....	20
Looking Back at 14 Years as Secretary .....	23
Messy Church 2022 .....	27
Writer and Comedian coming to Wokingham .....	28
Church Contacts .....	29

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,

Happy New Year!

A special note of THANKS to you all! For the many and varied ways in which you have contributed and blessed the life of Park URC in 2021, you are appreciated!

My prayer for us all in 2022 is that we would prioritize drawing nearer to God this year for strength and encouragement for the days and seasons ahead. For we cannot do this new year without God! Let us trust God with our desires, dreams, visions and goals. I pray that we would each respond to the call of God in our lives. God is calling out to us, and singing into our hearts. In the river of knowing God, let us swim deep this year. Swimming deep will require faith and courage. As we lean on God to withstand the current and welcome the many great things ahead including flourishing, peace and love.

Are you ready for a fresh start?

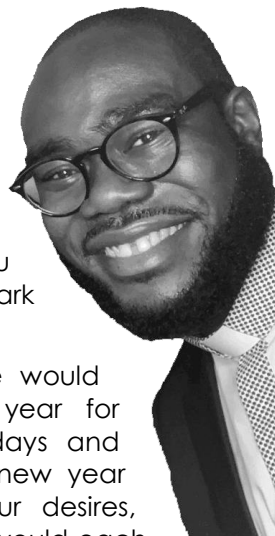
In January (during Sunday Morning Worship) we have been focused on Calling and Serving, have you noticed?

We ordained Henry Enang as an Elder, and inducted Chris, Zie and Rod as Elders! They responded to the call to serve their community.

I recently read a tweet by Pastor Rich Villodas saying:

*"If Jesus spent 8 hours a day, every day, for 3 years with his disciples, he would have spent over 8,000 hours with them. And after all that time, they still had major gaps!*

*1 hour a week on Sunday will never change people. We need a life that abides in him, with the support of others."*



That for me is a wonderful reminder of the fact that We are the body of Christ! [ONE BODY!] We are also called to abide in Christ.

How do we abide in Christ in our Park community? Coming up this month we will be having Bible study together on Sunday mornings, please join in!

There are sooooo many things that happen on a regular basis that help us to abide in Christ. One is Wednesday Morning Prayer, where we gather to fellowship and hold each other and those we hold dear in prayer.

Another is the First Friday Footpath. How does this help us to abide in Christ? As we journey along the way with each other, I am reminded of how the disciples journeyed with each other.



How do you abide with Christ in your own life?

Lord, keep us looking for signs of you around us. As we respond to your call and live out your will for our lives.

May we see your blessing around us. Grant us wisdom to follow your call to love you, our neighbours and ourselves!

God grant us your Grace too, to live faithfully as we journey forth in 2022 with you.

Amen!

God's Every Blessing,

**Stephen & Tolu**

## **Family News**

---

We send our thoughts and prayers to all those who are suffering in any way in these times of challenge with the coronavirus. For those who are anxious and uncertain, we pray for calm and reassurance. For those who have been hit hard in anyway, we pray for strength to stay strong. And for those who have or are recovering from the disease, which at present is quite a number within our fellowship, we pray for healing.

We pray for those who mourn. Peter Pay, Lillian's sister, Bev's nephew, and Renne's nephew have all passed away recently and we send them our thoughts and love.

We have heard that Suzy Weston's Mum, Pam, is still poorly and that Suzy is still caring for her Dad. We pray that Suzy will feel God's presence and great love for her as she lives through this challenging time.

We have heard from Jim Adkins that his house was broken into recently. He was attacked by the intruders and suffered a broken arm. We pray that Jim's operation to mend his arm goes well, and that God will help Jim and his wife come to terms with this traumatic incident.

We send congratulations to Lorraine Palmer, Zi and Enala's daughter, who has received an award - a Career Development Scholarship for Women in Science - from the International Society for Antiviral Research

We pray for all others known to us who are affected by ill health, or anxious times, or are receiving or recovering from treatment, remembering in particular Rose Byatt and her daughter Chris; Renne and Bert Ewen; James O'Neil; Linda Adkins; Steven Ballard; and Thelma Butler. From Hungerford we pray for Fiona and her family and many others within their fellowship.

Lord in your mercy ...hear our prayer

**Carrie**

## Feedback from Church Meeting

---

### Discussion on Deployment of Ministry in the Wessex Synod

The Meeting split into discussion groups, each focusing on one of the suggested resources – either ‘What is the Minister for?’ or ‘Dreaming Dreams’. The following is a summary of points raised:

#### 1. What is the Minister for?

Groups were first asked to list all the aspects of a minister’s job that they could think of. They were then given the 12 cards and asked to sort them into least important and most important.

<b>Least important aspects</b>	<b>Why?</b>	<b>Most important aspects</b>	<b>Why?</b>
Administration Counselling	Others can do this work	Leading Worship and Preaching	This involves leadership but also working in a team. It encompasses other aspects (e.g., evangelism, mission, outreach)
<b>Other aspects mentioned as important</b>		<b>Aspects not mentioned on the cards</b>	
Visiting, pastoral care Leading the Leadership The Leader		Know and encourage the congregation  Have a vision for future development  Know the local community, including schools, build relationships with other faiths	

	<p>Build relationships with groups using the building, be a presence throughout the week</p> <p>Take an interest in children's groups, develop interactive worship to engage children</p> <p>Keep up to date with ideas within the URC</p>
--	--

## 2. 'Dreaming Dreams'

Groups were asked to consider what they would like their church community to look like in 10 years' time. The following is a summary of their ideas:

Community outreach and service	<p>Make the church less 'churchy' and so break down possible barriers – build on the Messy Church model</p> <p>Provide opportunities for the community – e.g., musical activities for children; after-school tutoring; coaching/career building; street pastoring</p>
Worship	<p>Maintain/develop diverse styles of worship</p> <p>More youth/children-led worship</p> <p>Don't assume people's knowledge – worship to be more accessible</p> <p>Encourage expression through creative arts (not just music)</p>
Fellowship + Pastoral Care	<p>Build on the opportunities that Zoom worship has provided, to reach out to people in their homes and in their own situations</p> <p>More House Groups</p> <p>Dream of a church that is constantly growing – spiritually, numerically and multi-culturally</p>

<p>Witness + Evangelism</p>	<p>Meet people where they are at</p> <p>Offer children's and youth work during the week, not just on Sundays</p> <p>Have a clear focus for work with young adults</p> <p>Enable the church to become known as a place where people listen rather than judge</p> <p>Join with other churches in this important work</p>
<p>Learning + Discipleship</p>	<p>Convey the message of God's love – not necessarily through church services</p> <p>Develop and encourage discussion through House Groups</p>
<p>Leadership Development</p>	<p>Enable the congregation to share with the Minister in leading worship and taking other leadership roles as appropriate</p>

Groups were then asked to list one or two main priorities, and to consider what these might mean for the Minister, the Elders and the whole church community.

<p>Priorities:</p>	<p>Engage a wider range of people, the whole community</p> <p>Enable greater involvement of young people</p>
<p>Implications for the Minister</p>	<p>Difficult – with a new minister, who is still settling into his role</p> <p>Look for ways of supporting everyone to find and make use of their gifts and talents</p>
<p>Implications for the Elders</p>	<p>Look for ways of encouraging the whole congregation to support the work of the church – the Elders can't do it all.</p>



Implications for the whole church community	Remember that all are leaders, and all can play a part in driving things forward
---	--

*One final point:*

In discussing how best to facilitate this discussion, Elders – having read the Synod's introduction – noted with disappointment that the emphasis appears to be on managing decline rather than planning for growth.

## **Christian Aid Appeal – Christmas 2021**

---

Yes, Christmas now seems to be a rather distant memory; but at Park we managed some worthwhile things around that time of year. One of them was collecting for the Christian Aid Christmas Appeal.

This year the focus was upon the way that climate change is radically affecting the lives of families in Africa, particularly Sudan.

During one of our church services before Christmas we saw how, due to severe water shortages, mothers have no option but to give their children heavily contaminated water to drink.

The heart-breaking message was that families knew that the risk of serious illness, even death was a probability.

However, the more positive message is that Christian Aid, if given the money, can provide the expertise and local knowledge to create deep bore holes for fresh water to be pumped to the surface for communities.

Now families in these villages no longer have to live with the fear of drinking contaminated water, but they also have a plentiful supply for their livestock and crops, which helps them to go forward to the future.

So, thank you Park Church, you contributed **£325** towards the appeal this year.

**Chris**

## **Church Secretary's Overview of 2020 and 2021**

Dear friends,

I bring you this report following two years that have been so different to the normal life of Park. I don't think that at any time during the history of Park since 1908 have we had to close our doors to worship.

Following the Government announcement in March 2020. It was with tears in my eyes I had to put up notices saying that we were closed until further notice. In those first few weeks of lockdown, I don't think anyone could have foreseen what the following months would look like let alone years.

However, although our doors were shut we didn't stop worshipping together for a single week. Within days of the announcement people started talking about this mysterious thing called Zoom.

I can remember that first week when Rebecca Bullard led us in worship for the first time using "Zoom". It was just a short 40 minute service as that was the original time allowed. Much of that time was spent working out what buttons to press. We persevered and over the weeks and months became more proficient.

At the beginning of 2020 one of the things chiefly on our minds was moving forward with our Vacancy. We had been informed in December 2019 that someone had shown an interest in our joint profile with Hungerford URC.

In early January we were informed that that Minister had had to pull out due to a family situation. Within a few days we were told that another name had come forward and the joint vacancy group met with Stephen and we agreed to take the process forward.

We had planned a meeting with Elders and a chance for Stephen to visit Reading and Hungerford and even planned a date for Stephen to Preach with a view and to have a joint Church Meeting with Hungerford.

Then the government announcement changed all our plans. Luckily for us Synod and Church House found a way around the "normal process" so we would have to put everything on hold for maybe many months.

For the first time in URC history we were able to conduct a Preach with a view weekend online on the 10/11<sup>th</sup> May. Including, Bible studies, Worship, and Church meeting with question and answer sessions.

Following the views express by all those present at the joint Church Meeting, Stephen was appointed to be our Minister.

Once Stephen had completed his training in Cambridge we were able to plan for his move to Reading. This was delayed due to the restrictions in place at the time.

Stephen was Ordained and Inducted on the 4th September 2020. This service had to take place with a minimum number of people present in church but with over 120 online either by Zoom or YouTube. It was a memorable occasion.

The use of Zoom has been great over the last two years and as we have gained more experience our technical expertise has improved greatly. As I have already said all our Sunday morning worship has been via zoom since March 2020.

We quickly added Ignite and Wednesday Morning prayers. We have been getting more people to these services than we used to get when meeting in the building. Many people have been able to join these services who probably wouldn't have been able to come to the building. Luckily many of our visiting preachers during the vacancy were able to lead our service from their own homes (or gardens in one case).

We were able to keep in touch with the majority of people by email and via the weekly "Mail chimp" newsletter .

Many, many thanks to Julia for all her efforts with the weekly letter, the orders of service and organising all the pulpit supply throughout the vacancy and over the last two years.

House groups were able to start meeting again on zoom but as restrictions have lifted they have been able to meet again either in people's houses or at Church.

Elders, F&GP and Church meetings were also able to meet on zoom but we have also been able to move to a "Hybrid" model where people can join in interactively both from home and in church.

For our Christmas service by Candlelight in 2020 we were able to get together a socially distanced choir and record all the carols for use in the service. We benefitted from a grant from Synod to pay 50% of the costs of AV equipment to greatly improve the quality of these services.

In 2020 during Lent, as in previous years, we planned to hold a study course. Carrie had found a very good Mental Health based course called Lifting the Lid. Again due to restrictions we had to cut short the course but we were able to pick it up again and do it during Lent in 2021.

During the time that the Church was not being used we took advantage and went ahead with the plans that we already had to relocate the old Church Office and the Crèche. This work was completed in June 2020.

We were also able to paint the whole of the Church sanctuary. This was completed in July ready for Loraine (Bhebhé) Palmer's wedding in July. It was nice to be able to welcome Robert back just for the day to conduct Loraine's Wedding.

At the end of 2019 we had placed an order for a new digital organ to replace our ageing pipe organ. This was delivered in February 2020. It had to be temporarily installed until the old organ could be removed. Much work was undertaken by Simon to try to find a buyer.

Eventually a buyer was found. In March 2021 two Italian gentlemen arrived to carefully dismantle (pipe by pipe) the old organ and take it back to Italy. It has now been completely refurbished and installed in a Church in Sicily.

During 2020 our membership started at 102. With sadness Peter Short passed away in the beginning of February. Peter had been a member of Park for 64 years. He had served as an Elder and also on F&GP. Peter and his family had been very active members of the Church but in later years as his health declined we saw less of him. He was also a very keen supporter of the Scout movement at Park.

A few days after Peter, Pat Fuller passed away. Pat had not been well for quite a time. Pat was a member at Park for 22 years, when she first became a Member at Park she, and her husband Graham, who are both keen gardeners planned and designed the gardens at Park. We are still benefitting from her expertise.

In April, Geoff Cornell was rushed to hospital to operate on his colon to remove a tumour. Although the operation was 100% successful and he was expected to leave by the end of the week, he was not able to breathe unaided and very sadly passed away on the 24th April. Geoff was originally made a member in October 1954, he transferred to Plymstock in January 1982 and back to Park in November 1983. Geoff was a very active member at Park always willing to help out. At the beginning of 2020 we had welcomed Geoff to serve as an Elder.

During 2020 we were unable to have any baptisms and did not welcome any new members. At the end of 2020 our membership was 99.

In 2021, with sadness Olive Goodchild passed away on 27th July following a heart attack. Anna had had to rush back from holiday to the Hospital, Stephen was there to meet her and to be there with her to see mum. Olive had been a member for 15 years. She was a regular member of the Friendship club and keen supporter of the Guides and Trefoil Guild as well as a regular helper at Messy Church. I am sure she is now at rest with John, her husband who passed away in July 2018.

In August I met Andrew Weston who told me he is now settled in a Church in SW London and would like to resign his membership of Park.

In September it was with pleasure that we welcomed Justyn and Cerys Slatter as members by transfer from Wycliffe Baptist Church. They are both already very active within the Church, Justyn as an adviser to F&GP and Cerys has taken on the role of Flower Rota organiser.

At the end of 2021 our membership remained at 99.

The last two years have certainly brought their issues but we have faced them with the help of God and carefully progressed.

I would like to thank all the Elders who have supported me personally and all the fellowship during this time.

In 2020 Alistair Knox, Geoff Cornell and Rebecca Bullard joined the Elders meeting. Charlotte Blackburn and Enala Bhebhe stepped down. Sadly as mentioned earlier Geoff passed away in April 2020.

In 2021 Both Charlotte and Enala re-joined the elders meeting after a year. Elizabeth Knox, Alan Holms and Judith Enang were all elected to serve a second term. Rod King and Zie Bhebhe stepped down for 2021.

All our Elders are so important to the running of our church and the pastoral care that is provided. Especially over the last few years. It is a privilege to be called to be an Elder if asked I really hope people will feel willing and able to take on this role.

A lot of thanks also to Yvette Gayford our Treasurer and Rod for his assistance.

Thanks also go to Becky Joyce our Centre Manager it has been very difficult time to manage the lettings that we had and to ensure that the building was always used with care and personal safety in mind.

So many of our usual events we have been unable to do over the last two years but I'm hopeful that in 2022 we will be able to take them up again.

**Roger**

## Rainbows

---

The Rainbows are back! This term we have been meeting every week at church, and thankfully, although we have had girls unable to attend due to Covid, it wasn't through attending Rainbows!

We have welcomed four new girls this term who have settled in well. As usual we are kept busy with the Rainbow programme making sure that the girls complete enough skills to gain a badge and enough Unit Meeting Activities to count towards a Theme Award.

We spent an evening thinking about friendship and found out more about our Rainbow friends, what they like to do, their hobbies and (most importantly) their favourite foods!

Another session was spent talking about mascots and we then made our own using wooden spoons and various materials; the girls had to work out how to fix it all together.



As we have new Rainbows it has been good to spend an evening on the Promise so that the new ones start to understand it and the others have a chance to recap.



More recently the girls have made lantern lights for Chinese New Year. We are now looking forward to working together to build our own marble runs using boxes and tubes, before we end the half term

with our Thinking Day visits to the Guiding World Centres in Africa, Mexico, London, India and Switzerland.

## 30<sup>TH</sup> Reading Brownies

---

The Brownies started off 2022 with a bang! Unfortunately, we had to cancel our Christmas party, but we couldn't forget it completely. We started of the year with a New Year party – an evening full of music, games, food and of course, lots of fun!

As we have all got used to by now, some plans have had to change! Our 2nd meeting of the year had to be done virtually. It was strange being back on Zoom again but the girls still seemed to have an enjoyable evening experimenting with different balls and competing in an interactive Kahoot quiz! Some of them even put their brownie uniform on especially.

The last couple of weeks, we have been able to meet at the church again. The Brownies had an enjoyable evening making doughnuts (not edible), that look good enough to eat, and working towards the



Express Myself theme award by designing and making a zip line across the large hall.

The rest of the term will continue to be busy with lots more fun to be had. At the end of February, some of the girls are going to be taking part in a virtual Thinking Day event to celebrate World Thinking Day. This was a great success last year and we look forward to seeing what is in store.

**Heather**



## **1st Earley Guides and Rangers**

---

1st Earley Guides and Rangers started meeting at Park last term and already feel very at home in our new meeting venue.

The Guides have completed a variety of activities during the term including using binary code to make beaded bracelets, making and decorating candles, cooking biscuits and a science experiment to make liquid rainbows.

Ranger activities have included making “real” hot chocolate using grated chocolate and various flavourings, making fudge in a bag and cooking dampers on a fire.

As part of the “Reflect” theme award, we all spent time thinking about what guiding means to us and painted pebbles with inspiring messages. We also reflected on why remembrance day is important; the guides made poppy pin wheels and the rangers created a display on our notice board. As part of the take action theme, the older guides designed and made craftivism badges representing issues that they feel strongly about.

The Rangers explored leadership skills by planning a meeting that they could run with brownies or rainbows and had great fun trying out their ideas including finger painting art and making bear biscuits! We all made Christmas cards to send to local Age UK members.

Although we are glad to be able to meet indoors again, we still enjoy spending time outdoors. At the start of the term the guides spent an evening kayaking on the Thames, while the rangers challenged themselves to try stand up paddle boarding.

Only one person fell in (and that was a leader!) although most opted to jump in the river for a swim at the end of the session. On bonfire night we all went for a walk in the park, watched fireworks and had sparklers before warming up with hot chocolate.

We started the Spring term by joining with the Brownies and Rainbows to watch Cinderella on zoom.

Our Guide programme this term includes outdoor cooking, tent pitching, designing and making board games, and a letter writing link project with Age UK.

The Rangers have been putting their leadership skills into practise by teaching the guides how to pitch tents. They will also be using technological skills to record audio letters for Age UK members who are visually impaired.

We have had 3 members gain awards recently. Congratulations to Natasha who is the first Guide in our unit to complete the Guide Silver award and to Fatima and Issy who are the first two Rangers in our unit to gain the Ranger Bronze award.

We also congratulate and thank three of our leaders; Annemarie has completed 20 years of service to guiding, Vanessa has completed 10 years of service to guiding and Megan has completed her leadership qualification.

If anyone is interested in joining our team of leaders at guides or rangers please contact [earleyguides@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:earleyguides@yahoo.co.uk)

## **30th Reading Guides**

---

After a year of meeting online and outdoors, the guides were very pleased to return to indoor meetings last term!

We were excited to have a new team of leaders running the unit (Welcome to Abi, Claire, Kristina, Laura and Chloe).

We have had a busy couple of terms completing lots of different activities including a space themed escape room evening, paper aeroplane challenge, cheerleading, making lava lamps, creating sound effects and shadow puppets, painting rocks to reflect our beliefs and learning new songs.

We had a great time helping to decorate the church hall and Christmas tree and making gingerbread for the church fair. We also had a promise evening where several guides made their guide promise.

We were thrilled to present our first Guide bronze award; congratulations to Eloise P who has worked very hard over the

last year to complete this award including earning her whittling badge and her meditation badge. Congratulations also to Laila for completing her "Have adventures" theme award.

This term has got off to another busy start! We joined together with the rainbows and brownies to watch a zoom pantomime; one of the actors even made a guest appearance to teach us the pantomime song!

As part of our Be well skill builder, we have been exploring stress relieving strategies and playing games in the dark to help us learn about personal safety. We have also designed and made board games and learnt a new game called Peckish penguins! which is like Hungry hippos but played with ball pool balls rather than marbles!

We have lots more planned for the term including making our own "coffee shop" and learning to do latte art whilst learning about combatting loneliness, Learning to make slime and raising money for meningitis research U.K and learning about sustainable power!

We would like to congratulate and thank two of our leaders; Claire has completed her leadership qualification and Abi has completed 5 years of service with guiding.

**Sarah**

## **Why I am not a Humanist.**

---

As we put away the Christmas decorations, it is a chance to reflect, what was it all about? Not the details, the star or the shepherds but this God with us business, the baby come among us. What is Christianity is really about?

Or maybe the question is, what is Christianity about, in contrast to Humanism? Humanism- is unbelief- is atheism, as if humans mattered, being "for" something rather than just against. We humans are a great species able to fling a space telescope to orbit beyond the moon. The trouble is that we also can think that the Squid Game is an appropriate form of entertainment.

Humanism is the dominant belief system to the extent people express any belief system nowadays. (It is not the main reason churches are in the main empty- but it provides intellectual cover.)

It says, "Look, a Creator God is illogical. If you need a Creator to create everything, what created the Creator"? But this ignores the same assumptions in humanism. What defines the root laws of mathematics, logic and physics on which everything is based? The problem is the same.

Humanism tells a good story. Brian Cox in his BBC television series "the Human Universe" shows the grandeur of scale and time involved as far as modern science has taken us. He gives us the usual photogenic tour of the cosmos interspersed with scenes of human life as he considers humans to be the "source of all meaning" in the universe.

He does this after explaining that the universe has been around a very long time before us and there are whole areas of the universe that are simply too vast for us to explore. Yet, without any sense of irony, despite our insignificance, he feels humans inject "meaning" into the entire universe.

And what does "Meaning" even mean in that sentence?

Humanism seems to say, "look at Science- haven't we done well- we must be important." I love science, as maybe you notice, but it tells me a very different story.

Brian Cox and modern science describes a world of great beauty and to use Richard Dawkin's comments, inspiring of great awe. Despite the stunning pictures from space telescopes or detections of gravitational waves, cosmology is speculation until backed by experiment and observation. And mostly, it's not going to affect us at all. No one encounters black holes walking down Wokingham Road though it would enliven a journey on the No 17 bus.

We can have awe at the beauty of creation from the smallest bird to the most distant planet but in the end Brian Cox has to admit that all these systems are going on a world in complete lack of care and concern for humans and their well-being. The maths just doesn't allow humanity to pop out. It describes a rational, mathematical universe unsentimentally chugging on to a grey, uniform entropy death not to a peak in human civilisation. Brian Cox can only call on Carl Sagan: "For small creatures such as we, the vastness is bearable only through love."

Wait a minute! Where did that come from? It may be loving, but is it rational, Mr. Spock (as they used to say in films)? So, this isn't that rigorous at all! And this is the best unbelief can do after 200 years of so-called Enlightenment!

When we look around in the world today that are examples of astonishing love, like the now forgotten stories of the Brazilian women caring for new-born children crippled by Zika virus. Or the care of challenging foster children. The maths of self-interest don't tell you to bother! Yet, day after day people do this. People, you are a mystery.

We will not hear of a big experiment discovering a love particle. There is a limit to science. It can tell us what is there-but it forgets that it does not understand why. It is like understanding the mechanism of a kettle and claiming therefore to know why it has been switched on. Humanism claims to be able to answer that why yet so often trips itself up - such as not understanding the revulsion against live animal experiments.

It is not to say that much of the time humanism does not get you by, like the humanist doctor focusing on curing her patient.

But it is also capable of horrific misjudgements, making morality had become narrow and transactional, without thought to wider issues of respect.

But what is the essence of the Christmas story? The first gospel writers wove their story of shepherds, wisemen and stars. But Saint John writing later, had a lifetime to reflect and strip away the shepherds and the manger. Christmas was for him not about any of these things.

It was about a loving divine being, desperate to express its love to its creation. A being that could set two black holes on collision and be unsatisfied. A love so intense it could not sit alone but needed to express its love to a Creation that could respond – and yet with the maturity of love to let that Creation have the free will not to show that love in response.

This is the great insight holds Christianity above its peers and is our challenge to live up to. As St John writes, “In the beginning was the Word and the Word became Flesh... full of grace and truth” We still live in the shadow of these words.

A humanist in the end has no ultimate values: good and bad for them are a matter of taste and what can be got away with. You need an Ultimate being, to define ultimate Good and Bad. We have a Source, a Guide and a Goal. The path may be muddy and the goal unclear, but there is one.

To misquote the psalmist, “I look up my eyes to the heavens, from whence shall my sense of right and wrong come?”

**Alan**

## **Looking Back at 14 Years as Secretary**

---

In this magazine you can see my 14th Annual report as Church Secretary, and as I step down from that post I would like to take this opportunity to review some of the key things over the last 14 years.

In **2008** we were celebrating our 100 year Centenary, our by-line for the year was "Celebrating the Past Building for the Future." .. I think we still are. The year was celebrated by inviting many of those who had influenced Park over the years to come and lead worship. We also were able to enjoy many events during the year. In this year we were also presented with the "Child friendly Church" award. This is something we need to revisit.

**2009** Was a year of many "start-ups". A young people's house group was started. Agape this was run by the young people themselves for themselves. Unfortunately this initiative was not able to continue as the young leaders left to attend university etc.

This was the year we also started the Ignite Sunday evening services. These services were initially aimed at a 18 – 30 age range hoping to encourage students from the university. It still continues but the age range has expanded.

That year we also had a large group (45) of adults and young people who went to Spring Harvest in Minehead. This continued for a few years. With money bequeathed to the Church, Church meeting agreed to spend it on upgrading the sanctuary. We carpeted the whole Church and removed half of the pews. Church meeting agreed to remove the rest this year. We also installed a new projector and screen.

In **2010** many of the things previously continued, a large group went to Spring Harvest, in March we held a 12/7 Prayer Week. These have continued every other year. They are very special and many people are able to enjoy the peaceful reflective atmosphere.

A Pilots company was started to run alongside the Fizzang youth club.

**2011** was the year we installed the solar panels and the bio mass boilers. The pay back from these since that time has been nearly £100,000. We continued to hold Alpha courses.

In July we had a Church Camp at White Mark Farm, Watlington attended by over 40 people. These had continued every year. Hopefully we can return in 2022.

We increased our number of House Groups to 5, 3 are still running. House groups are invaluable to learning more about our faith and the Bible.

**2012.** This was the London Olympics year. It was also the year that a party of 22 went on a Mission to South Africa. It was wonderful time and a blessing to be able to share all that had been achieved in Siyabuswa, in Grace Christian School, Alathea Bible College and Hope Church. A small toddler group was started by Suzy.

**2013** Robert celebrated 10 years since his ordination and did a 3 month sabbatical tour of Reformation sites in Europe. Joshua Norris joined us for his final year placement.

Judith took on the toddler group from Suzy while she was away with Robert. The Toddler group exploded and continued to grow. Let's hope we can bring it back to its previous successful size. I know Judith would appreciate more helpers.

**2014** saw the development of new kitchen and new David's Hall. Probably the biggest development at Park since David's hall was built in the 1960's.

**2015** Robert had organized a pulpit exchange for a month and we were able to welcome Rev Rick King and family from Colorado USA.

We started Messy Church Services every 1st Sunday of the month. These were very successful and some weeks had over 60 people attending. A Monday Lunch Café was launched with the idea of making use of our new kitchen facilities. Unfortunately it didn't really take off.

**2016** Not much new in 2016, but Church Camp, Ignite, Toddlers, Messy Church, Prayer Week all continued from strength to strength.



It was the year that Read Collage starting to use our premises. The fact that Read have been able to continue with us for the last two years, working with the restrictions has been a significant help with our finances.

**2017** Robert informed us that he would be leaving later that year. Alistair stepped down as Treasurer at the end of the year.

**2018** Yvette took over as Treasurer, Rebecca Joyce took on the role of Centre Manager.

On all hallows eve Park held a Light Party for young children this was a great success and I'm sure it is something we will try to repeat.

Throughout this year we had a "Talent Scheme" This was the inspiration of and seed funded by Rod and Carrie. A variety of schemes were run during the year; cakes, crafts, cards, marmalade were made Anya produced a book of people's favourite pudding recipes (copies still available), Sally and Carrie walked the Mary Jones walk in Wales, Rod, Tony & Frances (2CQ) created a CD. A significant amount of money was raised to support our finances.

The First Friday Footpath Walk was started. On the first Friday of the month, starting in March, people met together to go for a short walk before ending up somewhere convenient for coffee.

We employed professional decorators to decorate the entrance lobby to the Church Halls. The Corridor down to the Ministers Office was decorated by a number of volunteers.

**2020** Rev Stephen Ansa-Addo joined us. With whom I have had the greatest of pleasure in working with.

**2021** I stepped down as Church Secretary

**2022** Simon and Jenny take on role of Church Secretary.

These were just some of the edited highlight's year on year many of these new events have become regular events in our calendar.

We pray that there will be new initiatives, maybe some of the initiatives that failed can be rekindled. All of it you that have dreamed them up, it is you who have joined in to help, it is you who have come along and taken part.

Thank you for your support in the past. If we want these things to continue they will all need you support in the future. Maybe the "puff" club could be reborn.

Some membership statistics:

- 34 new members by profession of faith
- 26 transfers from other church
- 1 reinstated
- 36 deaths
- 17 moved to list B
- 3 resignations
- 11 transfers to other church

This gives an overall decrease of just 6 over 14 years. It was 105 at the beginning of 2008 and it is 99 at the end of 2021.

They say that across the UK denominational churches have been decreasing on average by 3% per annum. If that had been the case for us our membership would have been 71. So I think we have been doing very well and we certainly shouldn't be disheartened, it isn't all about numbers.

We have a strong fellowship who care both for each other and the world around us.

It has been a privilege to serve you for the last 14 years.

**Roger**

## **Messy Church 2022**

---

We have an exciting series of Messy Church sessions coming up this term all based on Fruit of the Spirit.

Date	Theme	Fruit	Bible reading
6 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Love	Strawberry	Moses in the bulrushes (a mother's love)
6 <sup>th</sup> Mar	Joy	Orange	Sarah becoming pregnant with Isaac
3 <sup>rd</sup> April	Peace	Peach	John 14:27
1 <sup>st</sup> May	Patience	Apple	Pool at Bethesda
5 <sup>th</sup> June	Kindness	Banana	Good Samaritan
3 <sup>rd</sup> July	Goodness	Grapes	Good Shepherd
4 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Faithfulness	Tomato	Daniel in the lion's den
2 <sup>nd</sup> Oct	Gentleness	Watermelon	Psalms 23
6 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Self-control	Lemon	Temptation in the desert
4 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Advent/ Christmas		

Do come along and enjoy the fun!

Carrie

## **Writer and Comedian coming to Wokingham**

Writer and Comedian Paul Kerensa has written a number of fun books for 3-6s - all of which will be available on the day, and a couple of books for adults which are both light hearted and thought provoking.

Paul is probably best known as one of the writers of popular sitcoms Miranda and Not Going Out, and having met him and attended one of his comedy evenings, I would highly recommend this FREE event. (Plus you will be supporting your friendly local Christian bookshop and Holme Grange Craft Village!)

The event will be in The Chocolate Cafe at 4pm on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> February.

Refreshments provided. Book your place now by emailing [admin@quenchshops.com](mailto:admin@quenchshops.com), popping into Quench, or calling Ali on 07962869128

Be sure to let us know if you are coming, as the Chocolate Cafe are kindly hosting this and we need a rough idea of numbers for catering purposes. Ideally, we need to know by midday on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup>.

With kind regards and thanks,

**Ali** (on behalf of all at Quench Wokingham)

## Church Contacts

---

**Minister.....Rev. Stephen Ansa-Addo**

*phone:* 07835 810424

*e-mail:* minister@parkurc.org.uk  
minister@parkandhungerfordurcs.org.uk

**Church Secretary .....Simon & Jenny King**

*e-mail:* churchsecretary@parkurc.org.uk

**Assistant Church Secretary ....Carrie King**

**Treasurer: .....Yvette Gayford**

**Assistant Treasurer .....Rod King**

**F & GP Chairman .....Yvette Gayford**

**Centre Manager: .....Becky Joyce**

*phone:* 0845 463 6426

*e-mail:* centremanager@parkurc.org.uk

**Magazine Editor .....Rod King**

*e-mail:* editor@parkurc.org.uk

**Church Website: .....[www.parkurc.org.uk](http://www.parkurc.org.uk)**

**Facebook:**[www.facebook.com/ParkURC?ref=aymt\\_homepage\\_panel](http://www.facebook.com/ParkURC?ref=aymt_homepage_panel)