



the magazine



Park united reformed church
... praying for Ukraine

May 2022

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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

Ever felt like a PINBALL in a PINBALL MACHINE?!

Inspired by thoughts from Ellen Dykas

I recently journaled the following: "Lord, I'm feeling like a PINBALL in a PINBALL MACHINE

...moving from one thing to another. Responsibilities, a few personal heartaches, a trip to get ready for...

And also, friends who are struggling, the daily stuff like the food shop and setting up doctor's appointments." The list goes on. Can you relate?

Life can be really FULL sometimes and it can seem like the details of that fullness are bouncing around in our thoughts like the pinball machine's balls bouncing around from one bumper to another while our hands frantically push the buttons to keep the balls in action.

Oh...and those buzzers, lights, and bells always add to the commotion and chaos. Sigh... Which ball should I keep in action today?! Now?!

One wise way to respond (I've been told) is to DO WHAT YOU CAN

Do the very next thing you can.

Rather than frantically tapping and hitting bumpers to keep all the balls in action, consider how you can pause, recalibrate, and then move into action.

Do the next thing.

Then the next.



Pause

"Be Still, and know that I am God..." Psalm 46:10 NKJV

In the context of this Psalm BE STILL is a call for those involved in the war to stop fighting, to be still.

We speak that word over every kind of war being engaged in our World today!

After laying down weapons, only then can those that were fighting acknowledge the presence of God.

That knowing that God is God, recalibrates us, reminds us to TRUST the living God. Being Still and Knowing involves LOOKING for God

How are we LOOKING for God in our present circumstances?

At Communion, I normally say the words:

- Take,
- Eat/Drink
- And REMEMBER...

What am I asking us all to remember?

I am asking us to KNOW and REMEMBER, the FAITHFULNESS of God.

Remember that the Lord your God is the only God and that he is faithful. He will keep his covenant and show his constant love to a thousand generations of those who love him and obey his commands... Deuteronomy 7:9 GNB

Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments. Deuteronomy 7:9 NIV

Recalibrate

...be transformed by the renewal of your mind...Romans 12:2

Here are some ideas to help you recapture your day (and mind, and sanity), when the pinballs of your life are bouncing and the buzzers are buzzing.

1: STOP and PRAY.

Yes, a wise step is to lift your heart's focus to God in conversation. Just say, "Help!" or "Guide me, Lord!" or "Calm my mind, my heart, and my emotions."

2. DO the next thing.

What are the responsibilities that you must attend to THIS morning, or afternoon, or evening? It may be mundane, it may be monumental. Perhaps a routine chore you've done a zillion times or a scary step of faith. What is it? As a mom, wife, employee, leader, daughter, sister, friend?

Have you given your word regarding praying for someone, assisting in the midst of a crisis, calling or emailing a friend? Do you have tasks that must be taken care of today at work, in your home, at church? Do the next thing sister, and as you do, ask Jesus to give you joy in being his This is the key heart-calibration: you belong to the Lord, not to your pinbally schedule.

3. LOVE God, LOVE people.

My friend Heather has a simple motto for life: love God and love people. It's pretty biblical when you consider that Jesus said the entire law was summed up in these two commands! So, TODAY: what will love for God and others look like? Minimally, it is to turn to him and verbalize your need for him as well as your desire to keep your heart focused on him through this day, in the midst of doing the next thing.

Loving people really follows from that. What people will be in your path today, either in presence or via tech mediated communication.

When my day feels stressful with responsibilities, I know the temptation will be to truck on through my tasks, and ever so

subtly push people aside. I've learned to pray, "Lord please protect people from my sin today and cause each person you put in my path to feel cared for and respected."

Practice Galatians 5:6 today, seeking to express your faith in love. Loving thoughts, actions, words, presence...to whoever is in your path today.

4. WALK IN THE LIGHT GIVEN for today.

All we have is today! Yesterday is gone and tomorrow is, well...tomorrow! We don't have it yet. So, if there are concerns about the future, decisions you need to make, fear rising up from the unknown— walk by faith in what IS clear today. This helps me so much when my pinball thoughts start bouncing forward into the future that is not revealed to me yet. But there usually are LOTS of things that are clearly in front of me TO DO, TODAY.

Like writing this blog post. Seeking to love God and readers of encourage through my spiritual journey. Who can you encourage today? What people (little, big, older, younger) can you express your faith in love to today?

5. SET YOUR HOPE...

fully on the grace that is yet to come. 1 Peter 1:13 says our hope is to be in the future grace of our utter union with Jesus. Wait a minute...does this contradict #4? Absolutely not! We live faithfully today, but place our ultimate hope not in this world (or our obedience while we live on it), but in our true home, God. He alone is our eternal Dwelling Place and refuge from this pinballistic world. Live, love, walk...with your heart fixed on Jesus Christ.

6. START OVER!

These days, I'm praying Psalm 19:14 a lot: "Lord, may the words of my mouth and the meditation in my heart be pleasing to you; for you are my Rock and my Redeemer." This may be one of the prayers you offer in Step #1. Then...move on...do the next thing!

<https://encourage.pcacdm.org/2016/10/20/when-your-life-feels-like-a-pinball-machine/>

Stephen & Tolu

Family News



We rejoice with the Lancaster family as they celebrate the wonderful news that Frances is expecting twins. We pray for Frances and all expectant mothers we know of that they may keep fit and well.

We send our thoughts and prayers to all those who are suffering in any way in these times of challenge with the coronavirus. As numbers of infections increase, many are anxious. But we thank God that the infections do not seem to be severe and recovery is generally rapid.

We also remember all those in our family, friendship, and work circles and in our communities who may have friends or family in Ukraine, praying for God's wisdom, integrity and discernment to be fully involved in the situation, and for his courage, strength and hope to remain in their hearts.

Sadly we remember several family and friends of Park Church who have recently lost loved ones. There will be many people within our fellowship and community far and wide who will be grieving at this time, and we pray God will comfort them all and bring them some peace.

Some of you may remember Jenny Jones' brother-in-law, Rev Barry Vendy. Barry sadly died recently, and we send our love and prayers to Jenny's sister, Pamela, and all the family.

We also continue to pray for Christine Alderslade's granddaughter, Holly. She has been unwell and has been undergoing investigations recently with more to come. It comes at a time when she is due to sit her A-levels this summer.

We rejoice that Chris Gayford does not require any further treatment. His recovery will continue to be slow but it should be complete. Chris and Yvette once again send their thanks for your prayers and concern.

Please keep Stephen, Tolu, and Stephen's mother, Mercy, in your prayers for her health, and pray too for the family as they navigate through diagnosing her change in health.

We continue to pray for all the children's and youth groups at Park, and give thanks for the many young people and leaders who meet here week by week.

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, her Mum 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

Christian Aid Week – 2022.

The dates of Christian Aid Week this year are from 15th to 22nd May. There will be more information at the Sunday service on May 15th which I am pleased to say will be led by Chris Wong and Jenny Lueng.



There will be the usual envelopes for your donations that can be put into the offertory boxes for a few weeks after the appeal. You are encouraged to include Gift Aid if you pay income tax, as this will add a further 25p to every pound you give at no cost to yourself.

Yes, I know that there are so many appeals for your money these days. Also, money for most people is getting tighter with prices of the basic necessities increasing all of the time. However; what is clear is that those in the much poorer parts of the world are having an even tougher time.

Particularly as climate change is having an immediate impact on the lives of ordinary families. Those in the poorest parts of the world have done the least to cause climate change yet they are the people most affected in their daily lives.

Even those resourceful people, especially the women who are usually the back bone of their communities, now need some additional help.

What they need is a hand up not a hand out. With your financial help Christian Aid has the expertise and local knowledge that will enable them to grow their crops and feed their families. It all sounds so simple, but charities like Christian Aid have had a difficult time raising sufficient money to give the assistance needed to these desperate people.

As I said in the article that appeared in the magazine last month, in this country we are often critical of large families in poor countries, but children are especially important in countries where there is no social security to provide support during old age.

In these circumstances it is clearly understood that the younger generation have a responsibility to look after the older members of the community.

Also, because mortality amongst young people is high in these communities it is important that enough children survive to be adults.

Christian Aid has been working among the poorest people of the world for many years. They are the main charity representing local churches and Christians up and down the country. They are there to offer Christian love to our brothers and sisters across the world in their greatest need on our behalf.

I urge you to support this Christian Aid Week appeal if you can. If you have any questions please email me or ask me if you see me.

Chris Gayford

Minutes of the March Church Meeting

Rev Stephen Ansa-Addo chaired the meeting.

34 members and 7 adherents attended.

1. Apologies – received from Richard and Jill Brighton, Zie Bhebhe, Abby Jenner.

2. Notifications of any other business – Fairtrade (Gaye Rees), Toddlers (Judith Enang), Racial Advocate for Wessex Synod (Enala Bhebhe).

3. Minutes – the minutes of the meeting on 23rd January 2022 were agreed and signed.

4. Matters arising: there were none.

5. Membership, pastoral and mission issues:

- **Family news** – prayers were offered for those mentioned in family news.

6. Minister's issues including:

- **Lent and Easter Arrangements** – on forthcoming events sheet. Please do attend, including Lent Study Course. Thanks to those who are helping with Easter Sunday breakfast.

- **Gift Day**, 12th June 2022 – Elders propose Gift Day monies go towards development of organ area, including acoustic cloth for curtains where pipes were, and the space which housed the mechanism of the organ. Church meeting all agreed to this proposition.

7. Secretary's issues including:

- **Deployment of Ministry Discussion:** Feedback. Simon King told Church Meeting that the number of ministers over the Synod will be drastically reduced in the coming years. For full feedback, please see summary in the last magazine. The future of URC and Deployment of Ministry had been discussed at Wessex Synod meeting on 12th March. A great talk was given – a recording will hopefully be available. Feedback from all 130 churches who had had this discussion was given.

- **URC 50th Anniversary: Update** – reminder of Prayer Week and SALT Festival on 12th June. Service on 1st October at Methodist Central Hall. We have 30 tickets. Nearer the time let Simon know if you'd like to go. Also 10 tickets for visiting Church House in the morning. And 10 tickets for a walk from Church House to the service. If you want to bring children, order your own tickets or ask Simon to order them, as there are particular tickets for children. All events are free. If there are enough people to warrant hiring a coach, we will look at that.

- **Lay Presidency at Communion** – We have to send a Church Meeting minute concerning this. We have 4 people non-ordained whom Church Meeting over the years have agreed can preside at Communion: Roger Clark, Phebe Mann, David Jones, Colin Ferguson. The latter, as an occasional visiting worship leader, does not need to be included in the list as we also have ordained people in our fellowship who can be called on. Church Meeting agreed this list and confirmed that the names of Roger Clark, Phebe Mann and David Jones be put forward for consideration by the Pastoral Committee in order to continue to be able to preside at Communion.

- **Centre Manager** – Elders would like to remind church members to only contact Centre Manager about church issues when she is officially on duty/at work, and not at other times e.g. Sundays. You can email Centre Manager or we may introduce a book to write in. Or speak to one of the other church officers.

8. Treasurer's issues including:

- **Church Accounts 2021** – The accounts were approved unanimously by the meeting. We have a small but comfortable surplus of £50k.

- **Financial report** – Yvette Gayford and Rod King have drawn up budget for next year. Thanks to those who have kept up standing orders through lockdown which have kept the church going.

- **Issues from F&GP** – Car Park. We are awaiting the lease to be signed from the council. Yvette gave thanks to Rod, and

Claire Connell for all their help. Rev Stephen Ansa-Addo also recorded great thanks to Yvette.

9. Forthcoming events (to be distributed):

- **Big Church Day Out** (7th May) – Adult tickets £8, children £5. Let church know if you need assistance with this. 10am-5pm. At Hollycombe Steam Centre. Celebrating 50th Anniversary of URC, lots of fun and activities. A sign up list will be available. We will car share or hire a coach.
- **East Reading Festival** (Sunday 19th June) – Park hopes to have a table of activities. More details nearer the time.

10. A.O.B.

- **Fairtrade** – Gaye thanked people for their support. Area manager is leaving, so Gaye will no longer be able to acquire goods on a sale or return basis. Gaye will continue to buy tea, coffee, sugar for the church but other items may be on an order only.
- **Toddlers** – will start back on 25th April. Judith urgently needs more help – please let her know if you could be on a rota to help.
- **Racial Advocate for Wessex Synod** – Enala reminded church meeting of her role. If you are concerned about any issues, please let her know so that she can pass it on for discussion. There will be a consultation until 31st March. If you would like to know more, see Enala or look on URC website. There will be a meeting on 16th March to do with the consultation – if you are interested in attending on Zoom, please see Enala (there may be a Zoom link emailed out to all church members).
- **Collection for Ukraine** – a retiring collection will be held after the service next Sunday 20th March 2022.

The meeting closed with the saying of the grace at 12.47pm.

Park Prayer Week - 5th-12th June

Park is to host another 12/7 Prayer Week on 5th - 12th June, from 9am - 9pm.

Anyone is welcome to come and pray at any time between 9am and 9pm during those days. There will be areas for reflective prayer, for interactive prayer and for meditation. You may come on your own or in a group.



Maybe house groups, Wednesday morning prayers and other groups might like to hold their meetings in the church that week? There will be something for everyone.

If you, or a group of you would like to set up a prayer station, then please let me know as soon as possible.

In order for the church prayer area to be open during these times, we need people to man it. This is not a 'task', more an opportunity for you to spend some quality time with God praying on your own or with others, but also to welcome others to the prayer area.

Please let me know as soon as possible if you, or a group of you feel able to do an hour or two.

This is an exciting opportunity to welcome folk to our church, to share our sacred space with everyone, to spend some time out with God in our hectic lives, and to God in many different ways.

Carrie

WESSEX SYNOD
BIG 2022
Day Out

Saturday
7th May 2022

Hollycombe
STEAM IN THE COUNTRY

Attractions for everyone, Largest Traditional Steam Fairground in Britain, Steam Railways, Listed Woodland Gardens including an Azalea Walk, Treasure Hunt, Reflective Labyrinth, Live Brass Band, Synod Marquee and Activity Field with Interactive Zones and Workshops, Refreshments and Worship.

Save the date, more information including booking information in the new year.

50 The United Reformed Church

The United Reformed Church Wessex Synod

A great day out for all the family and for all ages

The poster features a collage of images: a steam train (number 13042), a fairground carousel, a group of people posing, a field of flowers, a fairground stall, and a large red steam locomotive. The background is decorated with a pattern of colorful hexagons in shades of blue, green, and purple.

**make a note
of it!**

2022

3 - 5pm

6th February - Love

6th March - Joy

3rd April - Peace

1st May - Patience

5th June - Kindness

3rd July - Goodness

4th September - Faithfulness

2nd October - Gentleness

6th November - Self-control

4th December - Advent & Christmas

Park **Messy**
United **Church**
Reformed **2022**
Church 

...from the noticeboard: **We Pray for Ukraine**

Reform
NEWS COMMENT INSPIRATION DEBATE

The United Reformed Church

50 The United Reformed Church
Faith - Hope - Love - Since 1972

WE PRAY FOR
UKRAINE

www.urc.org.uk/ukraine

The graphic features a white dove in flight against a blue background, and a field of yellow daffodils at the bottom. A QR code is centered over the daffodils.

...from the noticeboard: **Thirsty Thursday!**

feel like a mid-week cuppa and chat?
fancy an opportunity to meet up with friends?
or just feel like sitting quietly reading the paper with a coffee?

you can do all these
at Park Church's
new...

**thirsty
thursday**

every Thursday
from 10:30 - 12:00
starting April 21st



Following on from the wonderful fellowship of the First Friday Footpath walks, and in particular the pleasure of having a gentle, relaxed coffee with friends, we have decided to start a regular weekly coffee morning on Thursdays at Park.

This is Park church in action, working in our fellowship and in our community, making our contribution to help against loneliness and isolation.

The '**Thirsty Thursday**' coffee morning is very much a 'drop in' event, to be held every Thursday between 10:30 and 12:00 in David's Hall.

As the poster says, whether you want to come and meet friends and chat, or simply sit and read the paper with a coffee you will be very welcome – and the coffee is free!

Stepwise is Making a Difference!

What is Stepwise?

Stepwise is an integral part of Walking the Way – living the life of Jesus today, the United Reformed Church's focus on whole-life discipleship and mission.



Wessex Synod is delighted that Stepwise is now part of the life of the Synod with people having completed the first stream, while others are just about to start. A Synod Stepwise Advocacy Group has been formed and they have been working hard to make sure that all the procedures are put in place to ensure that Stepwise has been able to happen through the last 18 months.

Stepwise is a programme of learning and discipleship development for everyone – including you! – whether you are exploring and enriching your personal faith life, discerning where God's call on your life may be leading, preparing for a new direction, or developing a specific role within your community or church.

One key aspect is that, as a Stepwise participant, your group will have a facilitator and you will also have a mentor who will be with you throughout your Stepwise stream. The Synod Advocacy Group is ensuring safe recruitment and orientation of voluntary facilitators and mentors.

What is a Stepwise Stream? Stepwise has five streams: Faith Filled Life, Faith Filled Worship, Faith Fuelled Leadership, Faith Filled Confidence and Faith Filled Community. Everyone starts with Faith Filled Life, and then after that depends on you! You don't have to follow any set path through it.

Stepwise is open to anyone who is keen to reflect on and develop their Christian faith. If you're ready to be stimulated and challenged – and want to make a difference in your own life and the lives of others – then Stepwise could be just what you're looking for.

Stepwise is learner orientated and designed to draw on the strengths and to address the needs of individual learners, in the context of their communities and churches. The programme emphasises the vital importance of people learning from their daily lives, wherever and whoever God calls them to be.

There are different start times, so there should be a group that is convenient for you – either online or in person.

This is what you need to know...

- All participants wanting to engage in the Stepwise programme will have to begin with completing Faith Filled Life
- If you want to participate in Faith Filled Life, go to our Synod website and fill in an application form, and send this to Ruth Heine, development@urcwessex.org.uk
- You will then be contacted by a member of the Synod Advocacy Group.
- Synod will identify where the learning Hubs will be located within the Synod, and what online offering there may be.
- Groups will be formed logically for participants and will be registered with Synod. This will connect you for your login for your online learning.
- You will have a mentor throughout Stepwise, and if you are unable to identify one from your church, you will be given help to find one.

If you want to know any more about this, please contact

Mary Thomas dso-s@urcwessex.org.uk or Ray Stanyon dso-n@urcwessex.org.uk

Job Vacancy

Redlands Parish Church, Reading St Luke with St Bartholomew

Job Vacancy: Music Leader

We are looking to employ a Music Leader who is willing to become part of our church community and will bring enthusiasm and passion to our music making.

The main duties would be to prepare, rehearse, and lead the music with our small but committed choir for our Sunday morning worship (1030am) and major festivals (some evenings throughout the year).

At present, our singing is accompanied by a well-maintained pipe organ and a worship band that plays for some informal services.

We require candidates who have an instrumental skill, whether as organists or keyboard players. We are keen to encourage new ways of bringing music to our services.

We expect to be able to offer between £25-£40 per hour, according to experience, for 3-4 hours per week.

To express interest, find out more via an informal conversation, or to arrange a visit, please contact the vicar, the Revd Ross Meikle: ross@redlandsparish.org.uk

Please let us know of your interest before the end of May.

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