



United Reformed Church, Kingston upon Thames

CHURCH NEWS

February 2008



An oasis in the hubbub of... Paris!
Eglise Lutherienne Saint-Jean, September 2007

Church Diary

January 2008

Sun	27 Jan		Homelessness Sunday
		10.00	Traditional Worship
		11.30	Interactive Worship with Communion
		18.30	Reflective Worship
Mon	28 Jan		Poverty & Homelessness Action Week
		19.30	Christianity Explored course (2)
Tues	29 Jan	15.30	The Room
Wed	30 Jan	13.10	Lunchtime service
		14.15	Women's Fellowship
Thurs	31 Jan	15.30	The Room

February 2008

Fri	1 Feb	22.00	All night prayers + Street Pastors
Sat	2 Feb	22.00	Street Pastors
Sun	3 Feb	10.00	Traditional Worship with Communion
		11.30	Interactive Worship
		18.30	Reflective Worship
		20.00	Holy Space
Mon	4 Feb	19.30	Christianity Explored course (3)
Tues	5 Feb	15.30	The Room
Wed	6 Feb	10.45	Men's Forum
		13.10	Lunchtime service
		14.15	Women's Fellowship – Devotional
Thurs	7 Feb	15.30	The Room
Fri	8 Feb	22.00	All night prayers + Street Pastors
Sat	9 Feb	22.00	Street Pastors
Sun	10 Feb	11.00	Combined Service
			<i>COPY DEADLINE FOR MARCH CHURCH NEWS</i>
		18.30	Reflective Worship
Mon	11 Feb	19.30	Christianity Explored course (4)
Tues	12 Feb	15.30	The Room
Wed	13 Feb	13.10	Lunchtime service
		14.15	Women's Fellowship
Thurs	14 Feb	15.30	The Room
Fri	15 Feb	22.00	All night prayers + Street Pastors

Sat	16 Feb	22.00	Street Pastors
Sun	17 Feb	10.00	Traditional Worship
		11.30	Interactive Worship
		18.30	Reflective Worship with Communion
Mon	18 Feb	19.30	Christianity Explored course (5)
Wed	20 Feb	13.10	Lunchtime service
		14.15	Women's Fellowship
Fri	22 Feb	22.00	All night prayers + Street Pastors
Sat	23 Feb	10.00	Open finance meeting to consider Church budget
		10.30	URC Synod meeting - Croydon
		22.00	Street Pastors
Sun	24 Feb	10:00	Traditional Worship
		11.30	Interactive Worship with Communion
		18.30	Reflective Worship
Mon	25 Feb	20:00	Christianity Explored course (6)
Tues	26 Feb	15.30	The Room
Wed	27 Feb	13.10	Lunchtime service
		14.15	Women's Fellowship
Thurs	28 Feb	15.30	The Room
Fri	29 Feb	22.00	All night prayers + Street Pastors

Flowers for February 2008



- 3 Jean Thompson
- 10 Margaret Randall
- 17 Hilda & Nigel Tunley
- 24 Alison Holt

From the Minister

Dear All,

Outside my room the view is completely dark. There is no light and it feels so dark that you could almost cut a slice of the darkness. Velvety and impenetrable. It looks solid and insurmountable, totally lacking in light.

However, if I move my head even just slightly I can see a light – one light. At source it is probably white but now refracted through the bulb and the window it appears light orange even slightly golden. Move my head back and it is darkness. Slight twist and there is light. And more than that: I know that this one light actually is hanging on a Christmas tree in my neighbour's garden. If I was to look out the back of my house I would see it in all its Advent cheeriness. The one little light does not remove all the darkness but it does remind me that there is light and loveliness somewhere else.

Today we cannot sort out all of a person's problems but maybe we can be a small reminder to them -a small spark or a match. Maybe we can remind them or tell them about the light they know nothing about. And as you read this if you know nothing about this light, ask someone. There are many who would be glad to tell you about "the light that shines in the darkness."

*Best wishes,
Lesley*

The Minister's Confidential Assistant

Alison Holt is now working for the Church for 15 hours a week as a Confidential Assistant. Her work is to do the behind the scenes administration work to ensure that I spend my time doing what I am supposed to do. Her contribution enhances the contribution of others, particularly Margueritte Scott, who is so faithful and helpful to me and the Church. Margueritte will continue in her role.

Lesley

Keeping in touch with the Minister

To aid communication some information may be useful. As you know I have now got 2 email addresses. These are:

minister@kingstonurc.org

and

lesleycharlton@yahoo.co.uk

Most days I open both of them. Most days Alison Holt opens the one minister@kingstonurc.org

Information for the church should ideally be sent to minister@kingstonurc.org, because there is more chance of it being dealt with quickly.

The emails sent to Lesleycharlton@yahoo.co.uk are only opened by me, and that is where personal material should go.

Lesley

A delicate matter

I am sorry if my raising this with you is difficult for you. However:

If you were to die suddenly, does anyone know what you would want for your funeral? Does anyone in the area know who your next of kin is and how to contact them?

I would be happy to have a conversation with you. Put your plans into a file which can be handed on to my successor or successor's successor for future use. This glorious offer is not only for members of Kingston URC but anyone reading this.

Lesley

Derek's Comment



Where do you think God is calling us as a Church?
Where is God calling us as a community of people in
Kingston? I suggest that these are questions for us all.

The Elders spent their annual “Away Day” on 12 January 2008 trying to address these and other questions. We were ably led for our morning session by Rev. Ken Walker, Minister of John Bunyan Baptist Church, Kingston. He took us back to the time of Christ and challenged us to find a few of the 96 references to the Church in the New Testament. There is no doubt that at this time it was all about the relationships of the people with Christ. Buildings can help us now, but they must not get in the way. Ken’s session was skilfully presented by dividing us into groups and encouraging us to express our ideas through drawings.

The afternoon session was focused on ten tips for a better church presented in a paper written for us by Rev. Jonathon Wilkes, Rector of All Saints, Kingston. His first point concerned the word better, saying that when we think we’ve arrived that it confirms we are surely lost. He went on to discuss church buildings and how they can help to set people free to converse with God, either on their own or through the community that can develop around them. Jonathon’s further tips concerned prayer, music, openness to criticism and being honest with ourselves. He quoted Archbishop Michael Ramsay who suggested that the church was the only club that existed for its non members. Whose kingdom are we trying to build - God’s or our own? His last point was – be grateful.

Lesley skilfully planned and led the day. With the benefit of two previous sessions we listed objectives for the year ahead. With our building work behind us and a wide range of activities run regularly, we all agreed we now need to focus more on prayer and stimulating the integration of our members, friends and people who sometimes come our way. The Elders should now be encouraged enough to come up with fresh ideas – but the spiritual guidance for all this is just as likely to come from any one of us. The question is “What is God calling us to do?” We should use our building to the full as it is only a tool, and we all need to make ourselves aware of at least some of the opportunities and challenges around us.

Derek Winsor

Pastoral News

Christine Burgess is now in the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital and is making some progress. She hopes to return to a ward in Kingston Hospital soon.

Ann Mackay has had her operation and spent Christmas in Kingston Hospital. Ann has coped extremely well and quickly recovered. She is now back in her nursing home enjoying a much improved quality of life.

Gillian Carstens' husband has been in Kingston Hospital for an operation and returns for another operation in February.

Kathleen Clegg is really struggling with her health at the moment and has become very weak. **Alan** is extremely tired and worried about Kathleen.

Muriel Adam is now out of Kingston Hospital.

Tom Fiskin has had two visits to Kingston Hospital for treatment recently. He has a virus at present which has caused a chest infection. **Margaret** is still struggling with back pain.

Roy Cullum has recovered well after his minor operation in Kingston Hospital.

Dot Dixon has returned to Church as her back pain has improved.

Jeanette Troy's health has also improved and she has been back with us in Church.

Our thoughts remain with **Cliff, Myrtle, Linda** and **Mary Austen**.

We wish **John Reid** a happy 80th birthday in February 2008 and retrospectively a happy 18th birthday for **Jayne Scorer** in January.

We pray for Lesley in her dedication to and support for our congregation.

We also think of and pray for those on our regular prayer list: Philip, Olwen and William Sawney, Ken Trigg, Malcolm Levy, Olive and Jim Webb and Rose and Joshua Oming-Bali.

Lord, we praise You for all who have recovered from their illness and we commend to You all who face the uncertainty of the outcome of their illness or the illness of their loved ones. Be to them always a strong rock and a source of strength, and, in the midst of uncertainty and change, grant them assurance of Your unchanging presence. Lord, each day and every moment comes from You as a gift. Enable us to live fully in the present, cherishing the moment that is now ours. Let us not be anxious about the needs of each day, for Your loving care is with us. Quieten our fears about the future and give us the gift of inner peace. We ask our prayers in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Maggie Arnold

Poem from a Wounded Soldier

Lilias “Robbie” Robertson died in December, just short of her 94th birthday. During the Second World War, she served as a Lieutenant in The Queen Alexandra Nursing Corps. The following is a poem found among her effects.

“Now Robbie with a gas mask on:
Is fairer yet to look upon?
This her patients do discredit
Though the D. M. S. said it.

At nine o’clock all smoking ceases
But smoke from Wheeler’s pipe increases.
Findlay, too, sits there in error
Until they see the “Holy Terror” *

Now, Robbie is the best as yet
That we in Middle East have met
And we wish her happy days
O’er Highland glens and bonnie braes”.

Anon

* presumably Robbie

From Brenda Crump

Quick points from January Church Meeting

Ann Macfarlane reported that the Community Ministry Group was exploring the possibility of installing a shower on the first floor of the Church, mainly for the use of homeless people. This would cost in the region of £1-1,500. Other facilities such as towels, soap, etc, could be provided. There was also potential to offer this service to other user groups in return for donations. The Community Ministry Group would look further into the practicalities and the funding and report back in due course.

From Saturday 19 April 2008, it was planned to hold a “stay and play” event for younger children and their parents at the Church on the third Saturday of the month. This would involve messy activities and an optional act of worship. Church Meeting was reassured that care would be taken to minimise disruption to regular visitors to the foyer.

Rev Lesley Charlton stressed the importance of continuing to have a Traidcraft stall at the Church and encouraged anyone interested in the role of co-ordinator to contact her.

Rev Charlton reminded Church Meeting of the decision to support different strands in the Commitment for Life programme at varying time. Church Meeting agreed that the next strand to be supported would be projects in Zimbabwe.

Commitment for Life

The collection for Commitment for Life this year totalled £3,770-38.
Many thanks to all for your generous contributions.

Brenda Parkins

Dancing, Writing and Playing

There's a lot going on at the moment for children and young people at Kingston URC. As well as all our usual activities, there are Activity Days in half term (18 - 22 February 2008), and a Dance Show on 1 February 2008 at 6.30pm, when those who have been learning dances at Brigade will entertain their parents, grandparents, and any Church friends who would like to come.

On Sunday 24 February 2008, we are going to hold a news day and aim to produce a Youth Edition of *Church News*.

If that is not enough, on Saturday 15 March 2008, there is a Synod Children's Event 'Peacebuilders' and a Youth Event 'Peacebuilders+': even better they are absolutely free! And in April we aim to start a Saturday Stay and Play: more on this to follow.

Some of these ideas come out of the new Youth Strategy have *you* heard about it yet?

Emily Young

Christian Aid – Thanks to All

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the 2007 Alternative Christmas Card.

At January's Church meeting it was agreed that the ca. £600 raised (once all the promised donations have been collected!) will be sent to Christian Aid towards its work in the flooded areas of East and West Africa, where drinking water sources have been contaminated and latrines washed away. Please contact me if you still haven't paid up yet!

Teresa James

Be Alert!

We never know the day and the hour ... so be vigilant. Over the last few weeks, there have been occasions when people have experienced theft. Do keep contact with your vital possessions to avoid embarrassment or distress.

Ann Macfarlane

Speak Easy

Following Liz Cook's advice in December's *Church News* on how best to use the microphones, I thought everyone might be interested in these notes from a newsletter I have just received. The original article is by a trained singer who also leads voice workshops.

1. "Think of speaking like driving a car. It is much easier if you are in the right gear.
2. Posture makes an enormous difference to the voice. If you are standing, then ground yourself firmly so that you are symmetrical. Imagine that you are being pulled towards the ceiling.
3. Pay attention to your head and neck. Your chin should not be stuck on your chest nor should it jut out too far forward.
4. An easy confident stance gives you more space for the breath to support your voice. Breathing from your diaphragm slows your breathing and makes you speak more slowly.
5. Try to warm up your voice before you speak – for example by yawning as widely as possible; keep vocal cords lubricated with sips of water – not tea or coffee!
6. Eye contact matters – address your audience not the book in front of you.
7. Jangling keys or coins or clicking a biro distracts your audience and will only upstage you.
8. Conscious of your accent? Speak slowly, allow your audience to tune in and you will be just as comprehensible as the next speaker."

Submitted by Heather Lodge

Christmas Lunch

A big thank-you to everyone who contributed to running the Christmas Lunch this year, especially to Cathy and Becka who provided all the games and entertainment. We didn't manage our pass the parcel but 'guess who you are' and Scrabble' provided a break from Brussels sprouts and washing up (although the dish washer makes a massive difference). The group this year was smaller than in previous years but those that came seemed to enjoy their day.

Emily Young

Happy New Year – the answers!

Here are the answers to the challenging quiz in January's *Church News*.

Afrikaans	Voorspoedige nuwe jaar
Arabic	Kul 'am wa antum bikhair
Basque	Urte Berri on
Bengali	Shuvo noboborsho
Chinese (Cantonese)	Sun nien fai lok
Chinese (Mandarin)	Xin nian yu kuai
Czech	Stastny Novy Rok
Danish	Godt NytÅr
Dutch	Gelukkig nieuwjaar
Esperanto	Bonan Novjaron
Finnish	Onnellista uutta vuotta
French	Bonne ann�e
German	Ein gl�ckliches neues Jahr
Greek	Eutychemenos o kainourgios chronos
Hawaiian	Hauoli Makahiki hou
Hebrew	Shana Tova
Hungarian	Boldog uj evet
Indonesian (Bahasa)	Selamat Tahun Baru
Italian	Felice Anno Nuovo or Buon anno
Japanese	Akemashite Omedetou Gozaimasu
Korean	 Sehe Bokmanee Bateuseyo
Hmong (apologies for wrong order!)	Nyob zoo xyoo tshiab
Latin	Felix sit annus novus
Nigerian (Hausa)	Barka da sabuwar shekara
Norwegian	Godt Nytt År
Philippines (Tagalog)	Manigong Bagong Taon
Polish	Szczesliwego Nowego Roku
Romanian	La Multi Ani si Un An Nou Fericit
Samoan	Ia manuia le Tausaga Fou
Spanish	Feliz a�o nuevo
Swahili	Heri za Mwaka Mpya
Swedish	Gott Nytt År
Vietnamese	Chuc mung nam moi
Welsh	Blwyddyn Newydd Dda

Despite my confusing mistake with the alphabetical order, James Fells managed 25 out of 34. We owe you the box of chocolates! Apologies for missing out Russian - [С НОВЫМ ГОДОМ!](#) Or S Novim godom.

Bron Robinson

The Best Teachers

There is an old saying that books are the best teachers, and I am inclined to agree. Books don't shout at you, they don't dish out detentions, and they don't moan if you ignore them! So, when Kingston URC kindly gave me a lot of gift tokens, including some book tokens, I was delighted. Three books on Waterstones' shelves caught my eye and are going to keep me hooked for some time to come.

The first is *Re-thinking Christianity* by Keith Ward. I had always, and rather naively assumed that Christianity was Christianity and had always been so, and I expected Keith Ward to be pointing to the future and how Christians need to change to adapt to the 21st century. I was surprised and delighted to discover, from this Regius Professor of Divinity Emeritus of Oxford University, that Christianity has been through vast changes in its 2000 year life. Change is good. It is a vital sign of life in humans, animals, plants churches and religions! Christianity is a living thing, apparently. Good!

Another naive assumption of mine was that The Bible was The Bible was The Word of God. Some time ago I read *Whose Word Is It?* by Bart D. Ehrman. Ehrman's studies of ancient manuscripts have shown him that mistakes and intentional changes abound in the various versions that he has seen in the sources of what we now know as the New Testament. These changes continue to plague Biblical scholars who determine which words, phrases or stories are the most reliable and merit publication in modern versions of the Bible. When I saw Karen Armstrong's book, *The Bible: a biography*, I could not resist buying it. Karen Armstrong is a former nun who is regarded as one of the foremost commentators on religious affairs. She writes on Christianity, Judaism and Islam and believes that none of them holds a monopoly of the truth, a view that appeals to me. All these three great traditions, together with Buddhism, she believes, say fundamentally the same thing in spite of their surface differences. Her detailed story of how the Bible as we know it came to be also shows how different attitudes to scripture

brought about the Protestant movement, of which the URC is a part, and even fuelled divisions within it. Taken together with Ehrman's work, it gives a whole new perspective on the place of the Bible in our religious life and gives us cause to wonder how anyone can take scriptural text literally as some Christians do. Furthermore, calling the Bible "The Word of God", it seems, needs as much interpretation as Biblical text itself!

Having previously met the writing of Bart D Ehrman, when I saw on the bookshelf his book entitled *Lost Scriptures: books that did not make it into the New Testament*, I used my tokens to buy it. I had long wondered why so few people had written about the effect of Christ's life and death on contemporary society – that is the few whose work appears in the New Testament. I have not yet read any of this book, but a look down the index at the list of Gospels and other documents that people wrote about their understanding/experience of Christ's ministry makes fascinating reading. The Gospel According to the Hebrews – what a title! The Gospel of Mary (which one?) but what potential! The Secret Gospel of Mark – it never occurred to me that such a text existed – and that is to mention only three out of more than 30 texts that Ehrman lists.

So there is much serious reading to be done that is bound, I am sure, to change my view of what it is to be Christian – as if enough had not happened in my life already! For the relaxing moments, I now have a fine digital radio to take around the house with me, thanks to Kingston URC. Could any organist have been more fortunate? I doubt it. Thank you all.

Tony Wenman

Church News April 2008 – the Youth Edition!

The Youth edition of *Church News* (April 2008) will be will be just that - Lesley's letter, Derek's and Suk In's columns, Pastoral News and the Flower Rota are intended to be the only non-youth content. So write your article for the March or the May edition and enjoy the revolutionary Youth edition in April!

Editors

**A WARM INVITATION IS GIVEN TO ALL WHO READ THIS MAGAZINE TO
COME AND SHARE IN OUR SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES**

Sunday Services:

Traditional worship	10.00 (communion on the first Sunday monthly)
Interactive worship	11.30 (communion on the last Sunday monthly)
Reflective worship	18.30 (communion on the third Sunday monthly)
Contemporary worship	20.00 (on the first Sunday monthly)

One the second Sunday of each month a combined service at 11.00 replaces the 10.00 and 11.30 services.

Tea and coffee are normally served between the 10.00 and 11.30 services, before the 11.00 service (second Sunday monthly) and after the 18.30 service.

During the 10.00 service there are group activities for children of all ages. Children go to their group at the end of the second hymn. Visiting children are welcome to join them.

Private Prayer The Sanctuary is open daily from 11.30 until 13.30.

Coffee and Tea Our foyer is normally open **every weekday and Saturday** from 11.00 until 14.00 for coffee and tea.

A Listening Ear If you would like to talk with someone about a matter of concern you should find someone wearing a badge in the foyer between 11.00 and 14.00 on **every weekday and Saturday** who will be pleased to help.

Normal Activities:

Monday:	10.00 Parents & Toddlers (during school terms) 19.00 International Friends Café
Tuesday:	10.00 Parents & Toddlers (during school terms) 16.00 The Room (during school terms) 20.15 Badminton
Wednesday:	10.00 Parents & Toddlers (during school terms) 10.45 Men's Forum (first Wednesday monthly except August) 13.10 Lunchtime service 14.15 Women's Fellowship (weekly except August) 19.30 Prayer meeting
Thursday:	16.00 The Room (during school terms)
Friday:	from 17.30 Girls' Brigade (during school terms) from 17.30 Boys' Brigade (during school terms) 22.00 – 04.00 All night prayers + Street Pastors
Saturday:	22.00 – 04.00 Street Pastors

Kingston United Reformed Church is a member of the Local Ecumenical Project in Kingston Town Centre, with its partners All Saints Parish Church, in the Market Place, and Kingston Baptist Church, in Union Street

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Copy for *Church News* must reach the editor(s) no later than midday on the second Sunday of the month. Electronic copy is preferred, by email or on diskette. Typed or handwritten copy should be left in the editor's pigeon-hole opposite room 6. Contributions on matters of reflection and opinion as well as reports of activities are welcome

Next copy deadline: 12 noon on Sunday 10 February 2008
Editor: Vaughan James

Thank you to Mail Boxes Etc, 22 Eden Street, Kingston KT1 1DN
(telephone: 020 8547 1547) for printing Church News