



The
**United
Reformed
Church**

Sunday 16 January 2022

Please join in with the Reflective Service this Sunday at **10.30am**, in solidarity with all those within our church family.

Birthdays

Nikki on 18th

Gill's granddaughter Courtney, on 18th

Iris' niece Carol, on 21st

Church family news

Alan's daughter Katie and sister Pam both tested positive this week (200 miles apart!). Katie quite poorly. We think of Val and anyone else that is struggling with day-to-day life at present.

If you know of anyone who would appreciate receiving the church flowers, please let Gill know.

Please give any family news to the welcomer on Sunday mornings so that it can be shared with the congregation at the start of the service.

If you have any birthdays or news for next Sunday, please ring Gill on 827103 or 07899 897741.

Bible Notes - Every Day with Jesus

Are you feeling challenged to read the Bible more regularly this New Year? Every time we read Scripture we encounter the Living Word, Jesus, and grow as Christians.

In the foyer, there are free copies of 'Every Day with Jesus' - a booklet which gives daily insight into a Bible reading, followed by prayers and suggestions for further study and actions to take. The booklet is for January and February 2022. If you usually read another daily devotional book, you might like to try EDWJ as an alternative (or as an extra!). If you have not used a daily devotional book before, why not sample this one? Please help yourselves to a booklet and enjoy fresh insight into God's Word for your life and relationships in 2022.

Rachel L-J

Wessex Prayer Calendar – 16 January

Andover; Trinity Church, Totton

Heavenly Father, Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Heal this callous heart of mine from its arrogance and self-conceit And teach me to walk



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www.thatcham-urc.org.uk

humbly before you and in this world. Bring me to my final end depending only on your grace Secure in your love and free from all fear.

Today's writer: The Rev'd Dr Alan Spence

Sunday 16 January 2022

The service will be led by David Weller, with music by Rachel and readings by Jackie W.

Sunday 23 January 2022

The service will be led by Revd Nicola Hulks, with music by Karen and readings by Esther.

CTIT Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

17th to 23rd January 2022

Our annual CTIT Week of Prayer will commence on Monday 17th January and end with the Exchange of Pulpits on Sunday morning 23rd January. Our service on 23rd will be led by Revd Nicola Hulks from St Barnabas, and Revd John Lee will lead the service at the Methodist Church.

The Meetings during the week at different churches will be as follows and include 2 evening meetings and a Saturday lunchtime meeting for those unable to attend during the week due to work commitments:

Monday 17th at St Mary's, at 7.30pm

Tuesday 18th at the URC, at 12.30pm

Wednesday 19th at St Barnabas, at 12.30pm

Thursday 20th at the Baptist Church, at 7.30pm

Friday 21st at The Well, Green Lane, at 12.30pm

Saturday 22nd at the Methodist Church, at 12.30pm

Sunday 23rd Pulpit Exchanges between Churches

CTIT has decided to recommend that people do not bring packed lunches this year and each church is recommended not to serve refreshments. This is because of Covid requirements and high infection rates in the area. During the Week of Prayer congregations are encouraged to attend their own church, and other churches too in the spirit of unity. All are welcome and if anyone would like to know more please contact John Lee.

Please remember that the Elders and I are here for you should you have a concern or need help, or if you become ill. You have our contact numbers, so please do not hesitate to call one of us. John: 0118 957 3964

Newsletter

Deadline for items for the February newsletter is this weekend.

Church Website

Our new website is live – thatcham-urc.org.uk – and will be updated regularly with events and news. Our grateful thanks to Jackie T for coordinating the updated website.

Church spring clean!

Helpers needed to help sweep the cobwebs away!

Monday 21st February 2.00-5.00 or Saturday 26th February 9.00-12.00

Come along for an hour or whatever time you can offer, we will be pleased to see you.

Sign up sheet in the Vestibule or contact Esther

Full Covid guidelines will be followed so please bring a mask & gloves if possible.

Cleaning rota

I'm about to restart the church cleaning rota so please let me know if you are willing to be a part of this, whether or not you were on the list before. The more people we have on the rota the less often any of us have to do it! Thanks. Gill

URC Prayers during the pandemic

Weekly prayers from the United Reformed Church to help bring you comfort and spiritual support during the Coronavirus pandemic.

God of the future and of the past; God of hope and of worry. As we face another year, we want to feel more hope and less worry; we want to face the future and forget the past. We don't know what else we will face, but we know you will be there. Let us be comforted by this and know that although tomorrow is not promised, YOU are. In you we trust Lord, Amen

Alexandra Priddy, Elder and Children's Church Leader, Trinity URC

Kennet Community Lunch

12.30–1.45 £3. Wednesday 19 January.
See Graeme for details.

Vintage Adventure

Thursday, 20 January 2022, 2.30—4.00pm
Thatcham Methodist Church.

Book your place: contact Karen on 07444 851606 or email: pastoraldevelopmentworker@outlook.com

One day from URC daily devotions

St Luke 4: 42 - 44

At daybreak he departed and went into a deserted place. And the crowds were looking for him; and when they reached him, they wanted to prevent him from leaving them. But he said to them, 'I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose.' So he continued proclaiming the message in the synagogues of Judea.

Reflection

There are many demands on our time. Demands from family, from friends, from neighbours, from bosses and from colleagues. It's just the way life is. There are even demands from church. Most of these demands are reasonable and perhaps even do-able. We could easily fit them if we tried, couldn't we?

But are these demands actually for us? And are they what God is calling us to do, right here and right now? Could it even be that it would be better for us to pass by on the request and to empower someone else to do it?

In this passage, Jesus is facing lots of demands on his time. He'd tried to escape and get away for some alone time, but the crowds kept following him and presenting their demands to him. All their requests were reasonable. He could easily have stayed to help them and continue the good work He'd started in their area. It would have been the obvious thing to do.

But the plans of Jesus were different to the plans of the crowd. He knew what His purpose under God was and He stuck to it. May God be praised for that.

Prayer

Dear God, thank You that You have a purpose for each one of us right here and right now. You even have a purpose for us in the day ahead. Give us grace to see what You are graciously calling us to do and to respond with joy to Your call.

Amen.

Today's writer: Anne Brooke, regular worshipper at Elstead URC

Sunday 30 January 2022

Our Cafe service will be led by Revd Keri Eynon along with Alan & Gill, with music by Karen.

Thatcham United Reformed Church – Worshipping Together

A Simple Reflective Service for Sunday 16th January 2022 at 10am – Second Sunday after Epiphany

Welcome and Introduction – David

Good morning. I welcome you to our Sunday morning Reflective Service, watching online, reading at home or here in Church. It is good to be together again, especially in our Church.

Today's service is entitled "All in God's Time". In John's Gospel he refers to the fact that immediately after calling the disciples, we witness Jesus's first miracle while he and his mother Mary are attending a wedding celebration and the wine runs out. Jesus is encouraged by Mary to help the situation and instructs the servants to fill six jugs with water. Much to everybody's astonishment, as the liquid is poured out of the jugs what comes out is the finest wine, and his new disciples believe in him. So this week we celebrate God transforming the ordinary for us.

Call to Worship

Loving Lord, it's time to celebrate your love for us. Come, see Jesus, the one who delights us, the one who delights in us, the one whose miraculous grace can change us into something beautiful – Amen

Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving, Gathering Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

We thank you, Lord Jesus, for the gifts we so often take for granted.

Thank you for water to drink and to cleanse, and to nurture crops and flowers.

Thank you for food to eat and to share with friends and family,

gathered round the kitchen table or at a great feast.

We praise you, Lord, for surprising us sometimes by lifting these things above the ordinariness of every day.

When we break bread with other believers, we are blessed by your presence also, the unseen guest.

An ordinary meal becomes a celebration when laughter and cheer are shared.

All praise and thanks be to you for the everyday miracles that transform our lives - Amen

Creator God, abundant giver, at a wedding in Cana you turned the ordinary into the extraordinary. We come to you, ready for you to turn our ordinariness into something extraordinary for you today - Amen

We now join together and say the words that our Jesus himself taught us:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;

thy Kingdom come, thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen

First hymn - R&S Number 629 - Make Me a Channel of Your Peace

Sebastian Temple was born and grew up in South Africa and later moved to London, where he worked for the BBC on news broadcasts relating to South Africa. Sebastian converted to Catholicism and spent much of his time composing music for worship. He is best remembered for "The Prayer of St. Francis

Make me a channel of your peace,
Where there is hatred, let me bring your love;
Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord;
And where there's doubt, true faith in you.

*O Master, grant that I may never seek
So much to be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand;
To be loved, as to love with all my soul.*

Make me a channel of your peace,
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope;
Where there is darkness, let me bring your light;
And where there's sadness, bring your joy.

O Master, grant that I may never seek

Make me a channel of your peace;
For when we give, we will ourselves receive.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned
And in dying that we gain eternal life.

(From a prayer attr. to St Francis 1182-1226 – arranged by Sebastian Temple 1928 -)

Dedication of Our Offering

Loving Lord, we offer you these gifts of money, which we give in response to the needs of your Church. May our giving be a sign of our love and gratitude to you. May this money be used to serve your purposes within this Church, and by the way we live day to day. We offer these gifts in the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and redeemer - Amen

Bible Reading: John Chapter 2 – verses 1 – 11 – Jesus Changes Water into Wine

On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." "Woman,[a] why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet."

They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realise where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now." What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him. - THANKS BE TO GOD FOR HIS WORD

Reflection – All in God's Time

This week's passage prompts questions about transformation, both in our own lives and our communities. Where do we see God doing extraordinary things in our everyday ordinary lives? Where are the everyday miracles and how is God transforming us into something beautiful?

Some people would read a well-known miracle story such as this with great suspicion and would perhaps say that it was nothing but a very good conjuring trick. Or we might think that people 'back then' were just more credulous than us. These thoughts do not do justice to the miracle of the water changed into wine so consider, for example, the first person whose job it was to taste the wine. He is not a fool and after tasting the wine would probably have thought that the quality was perfect and the host is being very generous by serving such a good wine so late in the celebrations instead of serving the poor wine when everybody was drunk.

People are inclined to forget what Mary's role was in the story. Would the miracle have taken place if it were not for her telling Jesus that the wine had run out. Sometimes Mary is overlooked, but her quiet presence is important in making sure this first miracle took place. She saw a problem and identified a solution by speaking words that were very effective. The wedding in Cana is a celebration, a party, that Jesus and his mother were invited to attend. Jesus turned a regular wedding celebration into something extraordinary.

Some years ago when I was a Governor at the Francis Baily School I was talking to a group of seven year olds about Jesus and having mentioned the miracle of changing water into wine, asked them what they would have done in this situation. One little girl stood up and with hands on hips proclaimed that she would have sacked the person responsible for not ordering enough wine in the first place. Don't you just love them at this age.

All in God's time! I am sure you have heard the phrase – or something like it. But it's not always that easy, is it? We don't want to wait for things, we want them now – that is the culture, the twenty-first century society that we live in. We want things to change now. Whether it is a family member we want to be healed, a house move to go through smoothly, or the perfect job – we want it now.

Last year, when we were in the middle of lockdowns and restrictions, all of that stopped for a while. We could no longer just get in the car and drive to see family and friends whenever we wanted. We could not go on holiday at the drop of a hat. Celebrations – weddings, special birthdays, all sorts of things – couldn't take place or if they did, only in a very limited way. Of course, some of it was very hard: funerals with just a handful of family present; many of those shielding had little or no human contact for months. Yet, despite the undeniable difficulties and challenges, and without wanting in any way to play down the harmful effects of the lockdown, the part of it that was pressing pause on the 'now culture' was certainly not all negative.

We had to find other ways to celebrate. Some of us mastered the technology and shared birthdays via computer and phone screens. For many, going outside became much more important – we celebrated the sunrises and sunsets, starlit skies, waves crashing on a beach, a walk in the park, the first snowdrop or daffodil blooming. Whatever it was for each of us, little things became important and we celebrated them. We had to look for the extraordinary in the ordinary, and appreciate the smaller things in life, or things that we never noticed before in all our rushing around.

The power of the miracle lies not in how it was brought about, but in what it shows us about Jesus as God's Son. In the middle of an ordinary event, a wedding, God reveals his unprecedented hospitality. God upends the expectations. In the ordinary run of things, the best wine is served first; in God's reality, our expectations are turned upside down. The miracle happens on 'the third day'. It is a foreshadowing of God's definitive work of love: the resurrection of Jesus on the third day after his crucifixion. In John's Gospel, miracles always proclaim God's love for us in the middle of our ordinary lives. Amen

Second hymn - R&S No 594 – Peace, Perfect Peace

Edward Henry Bickersteth, son of Edward Bickersteth, Sr. was born in Islington in Jan. 1825, and educated at Trinity College, Cambridge. On taking Holy Orders in 1848, he became curate of Banningham, Norfolk, and then of Christ Church, Tunbridge Wells. His preferment to the Rectory of Hinton-Martell, in 1852, was followed by that of the Vicarage of Christ Church, Hampstead, 1855. In 1885 he became Dean of Gloucester, and the same year Bishop of Exeter. This hymn was written by Bishop Edward while he was spending his summer holiday in Harrogate in the year 1875. The words and music for this version were written by Kevin Mayhew.

Peace, perfect peace,
Is the gift of Christ our Lord.
Peace, perfect peace,
Is the gift of Christ our Lord.
Thus says the Lord, will the world know my friends.
Peace, perfect peace,
Is the gift of Christ our Lord.

Joy, perfect joy
Is the gift of Christ our Lord.
Joy, perfect joy

Love, perfect love
Is the gift of Christ our Lord.
Love, perfect love

Prayers of Intercession

Loving God, now that Advent has passed we should try the key to our heart's door as it may have gathered rust. If so, this is the time to oil it, in order that the heart's door may open more easily when the Lord Jesus wants to enter at the start of a new year. Loving Lord, oil the hinges of our hearts' doors that they swing gently and easily to welcome you into our hearts.

We thank you that everyone who loves you belongs to your family. You are our Father and we are your children. Thank you for the worldwide family of your people. Bless the family of this Church. May we accept one another as brothers and sisters, finding strength and joy in our life together. May we be a family open to all the families of mankind that, in the Church, they may overcome all the hostilities and prejudices that might otherwise drive them apart.

Loving Lord, we have come to this Church to worship, to listen and talk, learn and pray. We come to meet friends, young and old, to hear more about Jesus and to share with others what we already know. That is why we come to Church and when we go home, help us to be the Church, your people living in the world. Bless your Church here in Thatcham and around the world. We ask you to continue to support the Elders and Congregation.

Bless your world and all its nations and peoples, especially those you live in countries ravaged by war, famine, disease, drought and corrupt Governments. We pray for all those who are ill and ask you to teach the doctors and nurses so that they may try to find out more about curing and preventing illness. Loving Lord be near to those who are dying, make yourself known to them, give them comfort and peace and take away their fears. Comfort the bereaved and support them as they come to terms with their sad loss.

We thank you Lord for all those working for the NHS together with the many volunteers manning the vaccination hubs and ask you to please keep them safe.

Finally Lord we pray for ourselves. Grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things we can and the wisdom to know the difference. Give us the way to be, and the way to do, so that we become your people and do your will. All these things we pray in the name and for the sake of your son Jesus Christ -- Amen

Final Hymn - Beauty for Brokenness

Graham Kendrick was born in 1950 on the 2nd August. is a prolific English Christian, songwriter and worship leader, is the son of Baptist Pastor M D. Kendrick and grew up in Laindon Essex and Putney. He now lives in Tunbridge Wells and is a member of Holy Trinity with Christ Church, Tunbridge Wells. This beautiful hymn was written in 1993.

Beauty for brokenness
Hope for despair
Lord, in the suffering
This is our prayer
Bread for the children
Justice, joy, peace
Sunrise to sunset
Your kingdom increase!

Shelter for fragile lives
Cures for their ills
Work for the craftsman
Trade for their skills
Land for the dispossessed
Rights for the weak
Voices to plead the cause
Of those who can't speak

God of the poor
Friend of the weak
Give us compassion we pray
Melt our cold hearts
Let tears fall like rain
Come, change our love
From a spark to a flame

Refuge from cruel wars
Havens from fear
Cities for sanctuary
Freedoms to share
Peace to the killing-fields
Scorched earth to green
Christ for the bitterness
His cross for the pain

Rest for the ravaged earth
Oceans and streams
Plundered and poisoned
Our future, our dreams
Lord, end our madness
Carelessness, greed
Make us content with
The things that we need

God of the poor
Friend of the weak
Give us compassion we pray
Melt our cold hearts
Let tears fall like rain
Come, change our love
From a spark to a flame

Graham Kendrick

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Thank you for joining us today. Being able to worship and pray together, here at Church, online or at home, is still a great tonic but also in the knowledge that God is with us, enfolding us in his loving arms and guiding us each and every day.

A Final Prayer and Blessing

May Jesus Christ, changer of water into wine, transform us for his glory and give us that abundance of love and power so that we may share it with everyone we meet. Loving Lord, as you have loved us, so may we love you. Jesus, as you have called us, help us to follow. Spirit, as you have sent us, fill us with your power not only today but every day. AMEN

And so, to you, our Dear Church Family and Friends: Go into the world, knowing that God is with you. Go into the world with the peace of Christ upon you. Go into the world with the blessing of the Holy Spirit. And may the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit rest upon and remain with us this Day and for evermore – Amen

