

Pathway



The
United
Reformed
Church



*Newsletter of Broadstone United Reformed Church
February & March 2025*

Dear Friends,

I am really looking forward to Lent and there are two big reasons. The first is actually chocolate, which is not at all normal for me. I don't really eat much chocolate, so giving it up is not an issue at all. This year, however, I got the biggest load of chocolate I've ever had for Christmas and I committed to eating a little everyday - I really don't like waste!! It's been great, but Lent is going to be such a relief!!!

The second and some might say more important thing, is a focus on Lent that doesn't really get mentioned that much when discussing Lenten disciplines: Unity. There are all kinds of things that can be done as a new or renewed part of our routine in Lent. Anything that might be helpful in leading us into a deeper connection with God during this time can be quite life-changing. Having that little extra motivation and commitment for a specific period of time can just be enough to give our faith a boost or even a kickstart!

We talk about quiet times, specific things to study, things to give up, things to give. These are all brilliant and we can actually do them with members of other churches during the Lent study groups. What if our focus during that time is unity? That in drawing closer to each other, we might draw closer to God? If when we attended a Lent group, our real focus was the tea and biscuits time when we can start getting to know people? The studies will be great, but the unity that might flow from

sharing with and praying with new friends of faith could be something even more.

In John 17, Jesus prays for the believers, even those that will come to faith in the future, and he prays that believers might be one as Jesus and the Father are one. I think there might be two sides to Jesus' prayer, both of which can be engaged with at Lent groups!! I've always assumed Jesus was just praying for the church to be united. It seems obvious? Reading it today though I think he is also talking about a oneness with God. A unity of believers with each other and God. So whilst giving up chocolate might make me feel better and whilst personal reflection and prayer is invaluable, I wonder if we're missing something really important if we don't seek the unity of the church whilst drawing closer to God.

If you'd like to explore this theory further, Lent groups are on Wednesday evening, 7.30 pm at the Methodist church, where Karen and I will be sharing the leading, and on Thursday morning at St Anthony's, 10.30 am, where Nick and Helen will be leading. This year we are using the study guides from the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Please do come along if you can!

Have a refreshing Lent,

Andy

We remember in our prayers those who are, or have recently been, injured, in hardship, unwell or in hospital, including **Caroline Foster, Gwyneth Maling, Charles Meachin, Sheila McMahon, Tony Mesher, and Pat Purser** and her son **Adrian**.

We were all saddened to hear of the passing of **Pam Sales** on 9th December. She died peacefully in the Potteries Care Home. Our prayers are with Martin, Duncan & Robert and their families. There are words remembering Pam on page 5.

Mike Wanstall also sadly passed away just after Christmas. We remember his daughter Karen and all his family in our prayers at this sad time. You can read about Mike's life on page 6.

FAMILY NEWS

Janet Holland wished to pass on this message: *Thank you for all the kind thoughts and wishes from everyone following my recent health problem.*

At the end of November we were delighted to learn of the birth of **Constance Nova March** to Victoria (née Meachin) and Kieran March, weighing 8lb 9oz. She is a little sister for Matilda, and a fifth grandchild for Janet and Tim.



Local news...



Did you spot on the news that a local resident, Alison Kay, was awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM) in the King's New Year Honours List for her 'services to the Arts and to

young people'? Alison will be known to attendees of 'Broadstone Music Series' concerts held in various local churches including ours. The concerts are run by the music education charity 'Poole Society for Young Musicians' whose wider purpose is providing instrumental training and playing opportunities. Alison's role is Artistic Director, and it is her huge passion, dedication and enthusiasm for this musical mission for our young people that has been deservedly recognised. We offer Alison our congratulations.

Martin Casey

Message from the Treasurer...

As some of you will know the Church has had two different bank accounts. Recently, HSBC has seen fit to charge charities for this service so we have arranged to switch the HSBC account to our Lloyds account.

Under the switch arrangement "any payments sent to or from HSBC will be transferred to the Lloyds account indefinitely". The switch happened on 31st October and as far as I am aware there do not appear to be any problems. If any do arise and you need details of our Lloyds account, please let me know.

Martin Sales

Offertory envelopes...

Dear Friends,

As a lot of you know I have prepared offertory envelopes for as many of you that I know require them. If I have missed anyone or if any of you would like to use the envelopes, please let me know as soon as possible, and I can prepare some for you.

If you would like to speak to me about anything to do with the envelopes or to do with Gift Aid, then please speak to me in church or contact me by email, jeanorbrian@hotmail.com, or if you prefer you can call me on 01202 624824.

If you are a taxpayer then please consider Gift Aiding; it is an easy thing to do and raises a significant amount of money for church funds.

Jean Vincent

A big thank you...



Our Communion Offering for Prama last November raised £238. This was doubled by a fund matching initiative operating at the time. In a letter of thanks that we have received from Chris Beale, Programmes Director at Prama, he writes: *"We will be using this funding to enhance Prama's support for older adults with their quality of living, this will include recruiting more volunteers (we currently have a team of 15 volunteers), to help them. We estimate that at any one-time Prama is working with approximately 100+ older adults who are struggling with*

their income because of for example the additional costs of having a long-term health condition or caring responsibilities. We work with a variety of partner organisations to deliver the support the older adults need, including assistance with welfare benefits, pensions etc., heating, accessing low-cost food or equipment/ furniture for their accommodation. In doing this we also support older adults with their mental well-being so that they are confident when making decisions."

Ian McDonald

You can read more about Prama's work in Pat Johnson's article below.

PramaCare & PramaLife



Our communion collection in November was for PramaCARE, a local Christian organisation offering friendly and caring help to those who wish to remain in their own homes, despite ongoing health or mobility problems. The charity operates in Bournemouth, Poole, Christchurch and East Dorset.

After a request to PramaCare, there will be an initial visit from a Locality Manager to discuss the client's specific needs and a care plan is developed. This can cover washing, bathing and dressing, help with medication, shopping, domestic help, as well as social outings or company at home. Prama also has a Nail Care Team, the members of which can see a client at home or in one of the charity's nail clinics.



About 7 years ago, PramaLIFE was developed to arrange over 60 clubs, groups and activities for adults and carers. One outcome is that clients' own carers are able to meet people in the same situation and so stopping them feeling isolated.

Prama's vision is "a world where no-one is unfairly disadvantaged or excluded due to age or infirmity and where everyone can enjoy life as they age". The charity also comments that, as a Christian charity, they believe that people of all

faiths and none deserve the love, compassion and support to live the fullest lives they can.

PramaLife needs volunteers to help with their activities and are currently looking for more older adults to help those clients and their carers who are struggling to manage their household budgets because of the cost-of-living crisis. This can include the heating of homes and changes to the financial support provided by the government. In addition, many older adults find seeking help complicated and daunting as there are many support services, all with different criteria and ways of applying.

Volunteers will receive training and support to help other adults with these issues. PramaLife have realised that peer support is very effective as it helps people to feel that they are not alone and that "it is an equal relationship". Volunteers receive expenses for their travel and are supported by paid staff.

For those who feel that they would like to receive help from PramaCare their website is www.pramacare.org.uk; their email is referrals@prama.org.uk or you can phone them on 01202 207309.

If you feel that you are able to volunteer, the website is www.pramalife.org; the phone number is 01202 804914.

Pat Johnson

Church life in pictures...

Shoebox appeal

As is a tradition in our church, we once again collected before Christmas for the shoebox appeal. Thank you to everyone who donated money and items to the appeal, there were 49 boxes, matching our number from last year.

Of course, a huge thank you to Janet Meachin for the time and effort she puts into assembling and wrapping the boxes.



Advent & Christmas

Thank you to Andy and to everyone who worked so hard on all our Advent and Christmas services and events. It is a wonderful time of year, and we get to reconnect with it through these events, old and new, that they put together each year.



Advent Pop-in

In the Advent Pop-in this year, the children and families assembled a mighty array of crafts and goodies, including Christingles, angel decorations and gingerbread stables with Mary, Joseph and a crib! Thank you to Gill McDonald and all her helpers for their work on these wonderful family mornings.





In memoriam

Pam Sales

10th December 1932 - 9th December 2024

In December we lost a well-known and well-loved member of our church family, Pam Sales.

In Pam's long life – she reached a day short of her 92nd birthday – she lived in several parts of the country before settling here. Pam's musical and church upbringing proved formative, and that nurturing influence lasted throughout her life.

Pam and John Sales were married at George Lane Church, South Woodford, on 12th June 1954, and the couple spent their honeymoon in Minehead, where they had first met on holiday. As happens to many, changes of job for John meant moves for the now family with three boys (the eldest of whom we know very well), ending eventually in Hemel Hempstead, where the family stayed for many years. It was in Hemel Hempstead that Pam first became an Elder.

After John was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, Pam's role increasingly became that of carer, although John was able to maintain his job to retirement – and to continue to play the organ, a role that he had accepted not long after they moved to Hemel Hempstead. Once John had retired, the couple worked to realise their dream of living by the seaside; having visited Martin who had moved to this area for employment some years previously, and attended Broadstone URC when doing so, the couple moved here in 1990.

John became organist and Pam joined the Eldership and took part in many other church activities, including a Twinning visit to Frankenthal, Germany and singing in the Music Group, which John accompanied. Pam was also the Authorised Person for the church – a role which enabled her to be with John when he was at church playing the organ for weddings.

John's health continued to deteriorate and he passed on in 1997. By this time Pam was well settled here and, supported by friends and family, continued to live in the bungalow in Hamilton Road. Pam delighted in hosting, and took great enjoyment from seeing her extended family grow and thrive. Pam continued also to play an active part in the church and community, but health issues gradually reduced her mobility until in 2018 she accepted the need to move to The Potteries Care Home – but still as bright as a button, Pam continued to entertain family and friends in her 'room with a view'. In the six years at 'The Potteries' she was occasionally able to come to church in person but more usually she watched our services online and joined us in spirit. Pam was well supported and loved by the staff at The Potteries, much to the appreciation of the family, and she enjoyed her time there.



We will miss this stalwart of our church family, and our thoughts are with Martin, Duncan and Robert and the wider family in their loss, and we give thanks for this Christian soul it has been our delight to have known.

Martin Casey

In memoriam
Mike Wanstall
11th February 1932 - 27th December 2024

Mike was born on 11th February 1932 in Hythe, Kent. In June 1941, Mike and his brother, Brian, were evacuated to Wales. Despite having limited contact with his brother, and only a single visit from his mother, he had many happy memories of his time in Wales and seemed to have had an idyllic childhood. On his return to Kent, he went to school at Maidstone Grammar and from there went on to do his National Service in the RAF. He was discharged from the RAF in 1952 with an "Exceptional" rating for conduct and "Very Good" rating in all other areas.

Having passed the Civil Service exam in 1950, Mike joined the Inland Revenue in 1952, working in the Civil Service until he retired. He thoroughly enjoyed his career, saying that he was never bored due to the variety of opportunities it gave him and was rightly proud to be awarded a CBE in 1992.

Shortly after joining the Inland Revenue, he met a young lady called Jean Corbidge. Friendship turned into romance. They were married on 1st March 1958 and received a card from the Queen in 2018 in recognition of their 60th Wedding Anniversary.

In March 1967, they moved to Great Bookham, near Leatherhead, where they lived for 46 years. They became members of the local URC and were joint Treasurers for some 15 years. During their time in Bookham, Mike mastered the art of embarrassing their daughters Karen and Heather. Karen remembers him delivering

jumble to a Girl Guide meeting. This should have been an unremarkable event, but Mike decided to wear some of the jumble, striding into the hall wearing a fur coat and lady's hat and carrying a handbag. At 6 feet 2 inches he was difficult to miss!

In 2013 they moved to Broadstone to be nearer to Karen and her family. This was inevitably something of a wrench after such a long time in Bookham. We were pleased to welcome them and new friendships were soon formed. Mike settled into his new life with enthusiasm and was soon the go-to resource for recommendations on decent cups of coffee and pub lunches.

Mike loved music and had eclectic tastes. Herb Alpert, Johnny Ball and Glenn Miller albums sat alongside opera and classical music. When he and Jean were first married, they were members of a Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Group in Enfield. He inherited a saxophone from his father, taking lessons when he was in his 80s. He put the lessons to good use, playing in the church "junior" orchestra. He also treated neighbours to a rendition of "Somewhere over the Rainbow" during Covid when they were all outside clapping for carers.

The Church and his faith were a big part of Mike's life. He was an elder at Bookham URC and an active member with us at Broadstone URC. He greatly valued friendships at both churches, and will be missed.

Ian McDonald



Your garden in February & March

Based on the RHS monthly gardening tips & advice

As we look for the first inkling of spring in the air, it's time to prune shrubs and climbers such as Wisteria, as well as evergreen hedges. You can also prepare vegetable seed beds and sow some vegetables under cover. Hardy evergreen hedges and overgrown deciduous hedges can be pruned as well.

Into March, outdoor preparations can really begin. Seed beds can be prepared, winter shrubs cut back, and general tidying done. You can plant summer-flowering bulbs, as well as shallots, onion sets, and early potatoes. Also, don't forget to protect new spring shoots from the slugs!

Ann Scriven has generously answered the call for submissions for Pathway with a heartfelt poem. We are more exposed than ever through traditional and online media to tragedies happening across the globe, and it is a challenge to us all. The 'problem of evil' is a perpetual one, to be wrestled with in faith, but hopefully also faced through faith, and through actions that, insignificant as they may feel in the face of global horrors, promote goodness and peace.

Why, God?

When two or three are gathered and come to you in prayer,
You said that you'd be with us,
You promised you'd be there.
All over the world people come to you in prayer
So why, my God, oh why, my Lord,
Why are you not there?

Swords will be turned into ploughshares and peace will reign on Earth,
But in the Ukraine Lord, there is no peace
And the people have no worth.

Peace on Earth, goodwill to men, that was the angel song,
Why, oh Lord, we ask you, did everything go so wrong?
You said you knew Your plans for us; You said they were good not bad,
So why are the people in the Ukraine feeling so very sad?

Bomb shells bursting, guns ablaze people cross to the other side.
These are not the Israelites, they have done no wrong.
Must they wait forty years Lord, before the time is right
To rescue them and bring them home and save them from their plight.

Ann Scriven

Apologies from the editor...

...that the previous issue of Pathway that should have come out in early December never materialised. The next few articles were kindly submitted for that issue, and I felt they should still be included. Any thematic and grammatical anachronisms are entirely the fault of the editor!

Season of Illuminations and Miracles

Most celebrations have a set date in the year, Christmas is December 25th, Valentine's Day is 14th February, and so on. However, Hanukkah, also known as the Festival of Lights, is celebrated on the 25th of Kislev in the Hebrew calendar, which shifts relative to our modern Gregorian calendar. Coincidentally, in 2024 the first night of Hanukkah was December 25th. The earliest possible date for the first night of Hanukkah is November 28 and the latest possible date is December 26.

The Festival of Lights celebrates the victory of the Maccabees over the larger Greek army. It also celebrates a great miracle that happened during this time, where just a day's supply of oil allowed the menorah - the seven-branched candelabra - in the re-dedicated Temple in Jerusalem to remain lit for eight days.

For me, I love the summer season, being outdoors in the sun, playing and spectating sports and getting a tan. The worst season is winter due to the clocks going back, having longer nights and shorter days as well as the very dingy, wet weather and having to defrost the car windshield! However, there are a few pros for the winter season: 'Strictly Come Dancing' and 'I'm a Celebrity, Get Me Out of Here' are both on TV, having Halloween and US Thanksgiving, which are the start of the holiday season for me, getting in some overtime at work, and (hopefully) getting fluffy snow to make snowmen from! In December, there are hundreds and thousands of spectacular fancy lights around our towns and cities which I do love to experience. It's a reminder for me that

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Season of Illuminations and Miracles

Continued from page 7...

the festive season is upon us, illuminating our streets with festive cheer. It is a time of year for thinking of friends and family, and spreading God's love and his light.

Despite being in the worst season, Hanukkah is probably my favourite celebration of the ancient Biblical festivals I've written about for *Pathway*. For 8 days I follow traditional rituals of the Book of Maccabees and John 10:22-39, lighting my menorah, singing blessings and praying prayers that so many others through history have shared, experiencing the strength, peace and comfort of God. I also eat lots of chicken soup, doughnuts and fried foods, and sing songs like 'I have a little dreidel' and 'Ocho Kandelikas'.

More broadly for all believers - not just those like me who love the authentic rituals and celebration! - it is a reminder that we can re-dedicate ourselves to the spread of God's light and give thanks for God's miracles.

Al Hanisim, one of the festive songs for the Festival of Lights talks about the miracles and salvation whilst giving thanks:

*Thank you God for the miracles, the salvation
The heroism and the acts of rescue
And for the wars You fought for our ancestors
Back in those years, in these days!*

Happy Hanukkah and enjoy the festive season!

Saz Holland

The Christmas Truce of 1914

I can't pretend to be a football fan, but even I know there is something special about matches held between our country and Germany. Perhaps the most significant ever was, no, not the 1966 World Cup Final, but the one that is commemorated by the 1914 Christmas Truce Football Remembers memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. It was designed by a 10-year-old who won a competition between thousands of schools.

and famously a game of football. Predictably, the story goes, the Germans won on penalties."

Whatever the truth behind this charming story that occurred exactly 110 years ago, we can but pray that in a world beset by wars and conflicts, there will be acts of humanity this Christmas that let the light of the birth of the Prince of Peace shine through the darkness.

Caroline Foster

Speaking at its unveiling in 2014, in his role as President of the FA, The Prince of Wales said:

"We all grew up with the story of soldiers from both sides putting down their arms to meet in no-man's land on Christmas Day 1914 - when gunfire remarkably gave way to gifts. It remains wholly relevant today, as a message of hope and humanity, even in the bleakest of times. Football, then as now, had the power to bring people together and break down barriers."

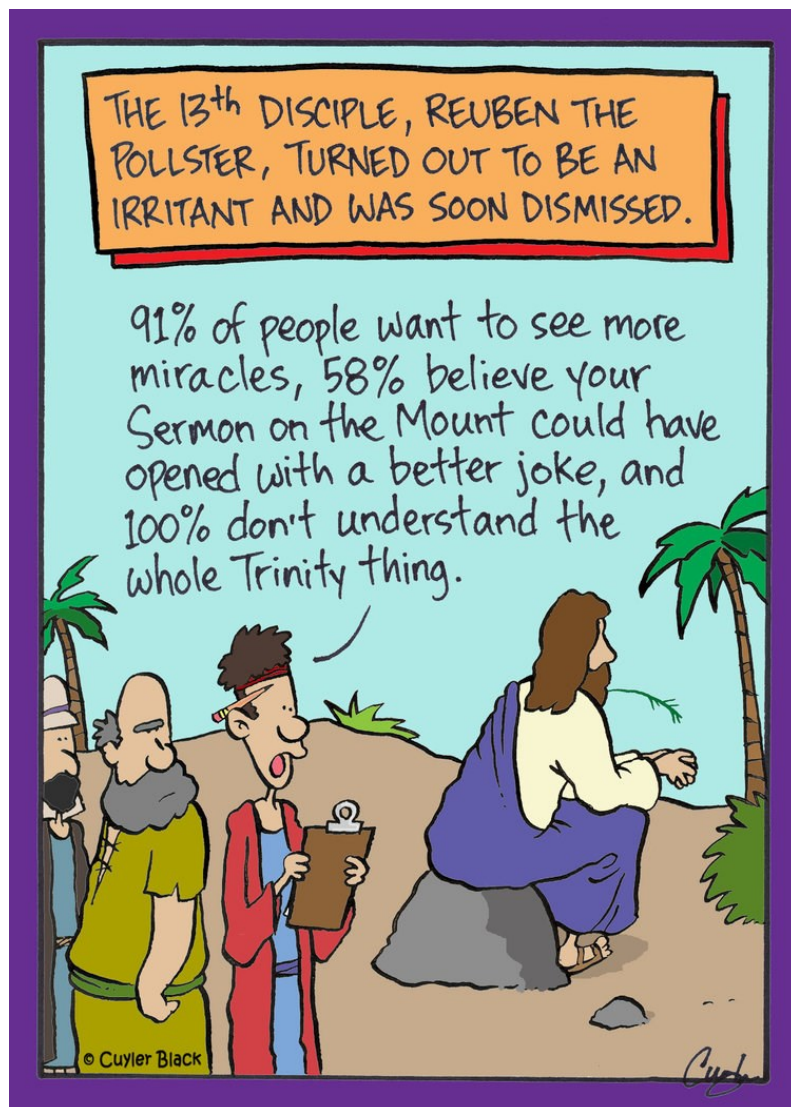
FA Chairman Greg Dyke also commented:

"Yesterday, I was in Flanders on the actual site of one of the events of the 1914 Christmas Day Truce - the kickabout between British and German soldiers. We were told the stories of what had happened that Christmas Day. How - amid the despair and destruction - the human spirit still flourished."

"How men from both sides were able to overcome the nightmare of mass warfare and celebrate Christmas together with a drink, a chat



Photo from the National Memorial Arboretum website.



From 'Inherit the Mirth' by Cuyler Black

Items for the April & May 2025 issue of *Pathway* should be given to Dominic Casey by Sunday 30th March 2025

Weekly Activities

- Sunday 10.30 am Morning Service
Holy Communion celebrated 1st Sunday
in the month
- Tuesday 12.30 pm 'Oasis' House Group
(3rd in month)
- Wednesday 10.00 am Yarn with Yarn Charity Craft Group
(alternate weeks)
2.00 pm Toddler Group
- Thursday 10.30 am Ladies' Coffee Morning
(alternate weeks)
8.00 pm Music Group

Monthly Church Meeting - contact Church Secretary for details.

See weekly news-sheet or get in touch for details of 'Oasis', Ladies' Coffee Morning, and other activities.

Points of Contact

Minister: Revd. Andy Hall
phone: 01202 698638
email: minister@broadstoneurc.org

Church Secretary: Mrs Janet Meachin
email: secretary@broadstoneurc.org

Treasurer: Mr Martin Sales
email: treasurer@broadstoneurc.org

Organist: Mr Martin Casey
email: music@broadstoneurc.org

Editor: Mr Dominic Casey
email: pathway@broadstoneurc.org

Web: www.broadstoneurc.org

Facebook: [Broadstone URC](https://www.facebook.com/Broadstone-URC)

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