

## CHURCH CALENDAR

### DECEMBER 2016—JANUARY 2017

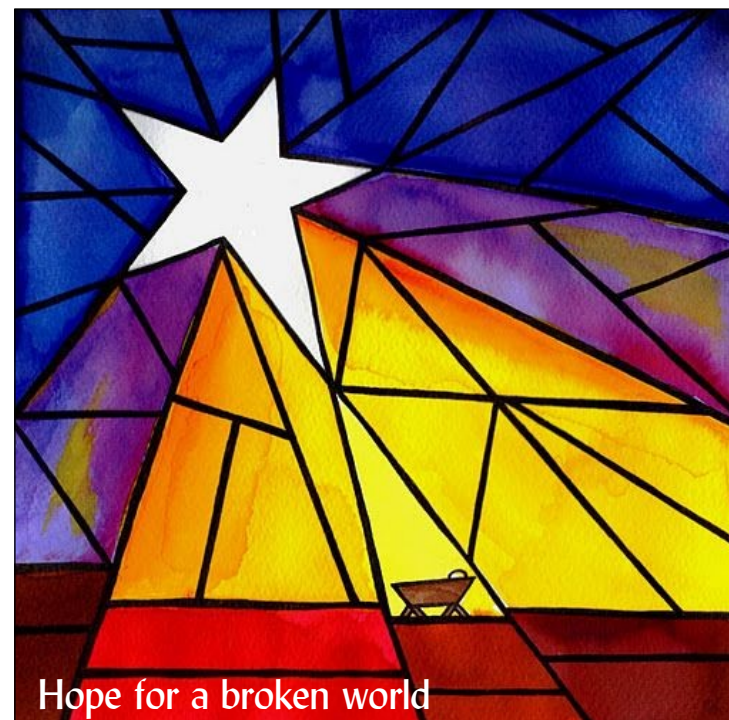
<i>December</i>		<i>Advent and Christmas Services</i>
3rd	10—4 pm	Advent Quiet Day at Beacon Hill (see p13)
4th		<i>2nd Sunday in Advent</i>
	10 am	Parade & Gift Service led by Revd Ruth Dillon (see p 7)
	6.30 pm	Evening Worship & Holy Communion led by Revd Ruth Dillon
5th	12 noon	Monthly Prayer Group
11th		<i>3rd Sunday in Advent</i>
	10 am	Family Worship led by Mrs Meg Nicholson
12th	2 pm	Bible Study
17th	10 am	Preparation of Christingles
18th		<i>4th Sunday in Advent</i>
	10 am	Family Worship & Holy Communion led by Revd Ruth Dillon
	6.30 pm	Carols and Christingle led by Revd Ruth Dillon
25th		<i>Christmas Day</i>
	10 am	Family Worship led by Revd Ruth Dillon



<i>January</i>		
1st	10 am	Family Worship led by Revd Ruth Dillon <b>No Evening Service</b>
4th	7.30 pm	Elders Meeting
8th	10 am	Family Worship led by Revd John Whitton
9th	12 noon	Prayer Group
	2 pm	Bible Study
15th	10 am	Family Worship & Holy Communion with reception of new members, Induction of Elders, and Church Meeting, led by Revd Ruth Dillon
18th—25th		<i>Week of Prayer for Christian Unity</i>
22nd	10 am	Family Worship led by Mr Ian Fletcher
29th	10 am	Family Worship led by Mrs Diana Middleditch

*Please be aware that the dates and times of meetings and social events may change. You are advised to check beforehand on the church website, [www.fleet.urb.org.uk](http://www.fleet.urb.org.uk), or with Assistant Administrator, Margaret Armes (650994).*

Items for the February-March issue of *In Touch* should be with Christine Gibbons by **Sunday 15th January 2017** ([christine.gibbons@beech-ride.co.uk](mailto:christine.gibbons@beech-ride.co.uk)).



December 2016—January 2017



Fleet United Reformed Church

"We are a community of faithful Christian people, working to spread the love of God to all."  
*Our Mission Statement*



## FLEET UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Kings Road, Fleet, Hampshire, GU51 3AF

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[www.facebook.com/fleeturc](https://www.facebook.com/fleeturc)



@FleetURC

### CHURCH CONTACTS

<i>Minister:</i>	<b>Revd Ruth Dillon</b> , 01252 625238 <a href="mailto:revrdillon@btinternet.com">revrdillon@btinternet.com</a>
<i>Secretary:</i>	<b>Moray Henderson</b> , 01252 659569 <a href="mailto:moray.henderson@ntlworld.com">moray.henderson@ntlworld.com</a>
<i>Assistant Administrator:</i>	<b>Margaret Armes</b> , 01252 650994 <a href="mailto:b.ames@ntlworld.com">b.ames@ntlworld.com</a>
<i>Treasurer:</i>	<b>John Gibbons</b> , 01252 614200 <a href="mailto:jmgibbons@hotmail.com">jmgibbons@hotmail.com</a>
<i>Hall Bookings:</i>	<b>Brian Armes</b> , 01252 650994 <a href="mailto:b.ames@ntlworld.com">b.ames@ntlworld.com</a>

### SUNDAY WORSHIP

10 am: Family Worship

Holy Communion usually on third Sunday of month

First Sunday only: 6.30 pm Holy Communion

### REGULAR ACTIVITIES

<i>'Footsteps' Young People's Group:</i>	Sundays, 10 am ( <i>term time only</i> )
<i>House Group:</i>	Mondays, 10 am (at 35 Frere Ave)
<i>Prayer Group:</i>	See page 5 for dates and times
<i>Bible Study:</i>	See page 5 for dates and times
<i>Pilots:</i>	Tuesdays, 4-5 pm ( <i>term time only</i> )
<i>Coffee Morning:</i>	Thursdays, 10–11.30 am
<i>Toddlers Group:</i>	Fridays, 10 am

Under the umbrella of the United Reformed Church, *Brownie* and *Rainbow Units* meet each week during school term.

Up to date details of all the above activities are available from the Church Office, from the Church Secretary, or on our website.

### FROM THE MANSE



#### Dear Friends

It is part of a minister's lot, I suppose, to have to anticipate the various seasons and festivals of the Christian year; and so it is that I am writing this letter for the Christmas magazine just after Remembrance Sunday.

I have already been thinking about the seven carol services that I will be undertaking—plus two nativities, four carol singing invitations, one council meeting prayers, preparing Advent devotions for Fleet and Beacon Hill, two December baptisms, and

of course the church Christmas services.

It is unfortunate that the final three months of the year ('the run up to Christmas') and even Advent, a time of waiting, preparing and expectation, are swallowed up by pre-Christmas events. I entirely understand that schools, for instance, should want a Christmas celebration before term ends, but I fear that the desire to start the Christmas build-up so early is a sign that, as a society, we are not good at waiting.

The world has become a very impatient place. We move from one supermarket checkout queue to another in an attempt to get served more quickly, only to discover that the first queue was moving more quickly after all!

Try sticking to a rigid 20 miles an hour in a speed limit area, and you will soon become aware of people desperate to overtake, so that they can reach the next red traffic light three seconds before you do!

Of course the revolution in information technology encourages us to expect a very rapid response to all our communications. So we become less used to having to wait.

I feel we are in danger of losing the importance of the present moment; of being alert as to what is going on around us; of stopping to really listen to other people and being sensitive to them, of enjoying the here and now rather than rushing on towards the next thing.

If this is how we sometimes live, what chance has God of being allowed into our hearts or 'getting a word in edgeways'?

Christmas demands a time of preparation and waiting if we are to take seriously the need to be challenged by God coming among us, in the babe of Bethlehem, Jesus.

We all know the uneasy feeling, perhaps even panic, when a guest turns up too early for a meal or a meeting and we wish we had given ourselves more preparation time. A visit can be truly spoiled in that way.

This Christmas Day, William, Hannah and I will be sharing our Christmas dinner with a large group of people who would otherwise be alone. It was planned in September; but planning early means that we are able to share

the joy with others on Christmas Day.

So even though you are reading this on the first Sunday in Advent, may we all make time to be ready for the coming of Jesus at Christmas, by asking whether we are prepared for his demands, for what he expects from us his disciples, and being attentive to the present moment, when he might challenge us and expect a response in life's many ordinary situations.

May I wish you all a very happy and blessed Christmas, with all good wishes for 2017.

Every blessing

Ruth



### THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH DAILY DEVOTIONS ON LINE

The URC is offering a new series of daily readings and reflections by email, starting on Advent Sunday, 27th November.

For more information, and to subscribe to this new URC service, go to:

<http://www.urc.org.uk/worship/2214-sign-up-for-advent-daily-devotions.html>

### THE SCENT OF LOVE— Advent Devotions 2017

A booklet is available for anyone who would like to have access to a short reflection each day during Advent. The theme is 'The Scent of Love'.



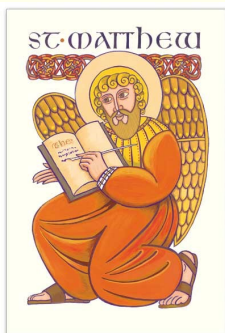
Please feel free to take one for yourself, or to give to a neighbour or friend as a gift.

### GOSPEL LECTIONARY FOR 2017

2017 will see the Church Lectionary exploring the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew's Gospel is clear, organised and practical, giving much instruction on Jesus's lifestyle and relationships.

It is a caring Gospel where Christian commitment is important to the writer, as Matthew is the most Jewish of the Gospels.

As we explore Matthew's view on a variety of issues with Jesus each week, may God open our eyes to the faithfulness that Matthew brings.—Ruth



### CHURCH MEMBERSHIP SESSIONS

We are pleased to invite the following people into membership during morning service on **15th January** :

Carol Rayner, Pauline Porter, Cris Porter, Steve Lucas, Pam Lucas, Grace Easton

Please welcome them as they make their membership promises that day.



### NOTICE BOARD



Bible  
STUDY  
Join us!

### BIBLE STUDY GROUP

Each month we meet in the vestry to explore the Lectionary readings for the following Sunday. The next meetings will be at **2 pm** on:

**Monday, 12th December**  
**Monday, 9th January**

(NB This is the same day as the Prayer Group)

### RETREAT AND ANNUAL LEAVE

Ruth, our Minister, will not be available from:

**23rd—26th January**  
(Silent retreat in Northumbria)  
**27th January—1st February**  
(annual leave)

### MONTHLY PRAYER GROUP

The monthly Prayer Group will meet on the following dates at **12 noon** in the vestry at Fleet URC

**Monday, 5th December**  
**Monday, 9th January**

Come and join us for 30 minutes of quiet meditation and prayer.

### KNITTING WOOL WANTED



Left over balls of wool—any size, any colour—are always needed by volunteers who knit clothes for the premature baby unit at Frimley Park. If you can help, please contact Margot Cooper or Margaret Armes.

### CHRISTINGLE PREPARATIONS

Volunteers are needed to help prepare the Christingles for our Carol and Christingle Service on 18th December.

We will be meeting on **Saturday 17th December** at **10 am** in the Church Hall







## CHURCHES TOGETHER IN FLEET AND CROOKHAM (CTFC)

*Angel Bombing for Fleet:* The response for knitted angels from the congregations and friends of the churches has been amazing. After the last count we are nearing our target of 600 angels, which is the number believed to be needed to cover the main

shopping area of Fleet Road. Our hope is that we can get nearer to 700, to cover other areas as well.

There will be a working party at Fleet Methodist Church at **10 am on Saturday 10th December** to attach the Blessing labels on to the angels. If you feel you would like to join me on that day, please can you bring a needle and, if possible, some fine wool (any colour).

The exciting part of distributing them on **Saturday 17th December** is the next phase. An early start, I am afraid - **6 am!!** This will hopefully be completed by 7.30 am.

*Christmas Day Meal:* The preparations are going well, and the generosity shown by Waitrose and Morrisons has been wonderful.

The Heron on the Lake are also supporting the meal, providing the turkey, napkins, crackers etc. They have also asked if local churches can bring the 'True Meaning of Christmas' to their restaurant, and so we will be singing carols there on the following dates: **Thursday, 15th December at 8.30 pm, and Thursday 22nd December at 7.30 pm.**

The Heron on the Lake will have collecting buckets out, and will give 10% of their takings as well. We are looking for at least two people to sing from each church—names to me, please.

Thank you to all those who have offered to help with the various projects, including our knitters, who have given me 53 angels. (I am still collecting!)

*Darrell Henderson, CTFC Representative*

At a recent Church Meeting Jill Durbin was presented with a gift voucher in recognition of her many years of faithful service as the CTFC representative for Fleet URC.



## GIFT SERVICE FOR SEE-ABILITY

The Gift Service on **4th December** will be for See-Ability.

See-Ability is a specialist registered charity enriching the lives of people who have sight loss and other disabilities. One of their homes is in Fleet.

They have suggested that the following types of gifts would be most appreciated:

*Toiletries (especially Dove & Simple), socks, biscuits, sweets, tinned fruits, jam/marmalade*



## ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL CRAFT AND GIFT FAIR

Where has the year gone? Our 10th Annual Craft and Gift Fair under our belts, and again it was a success. It started out with a warm welcome and prayer from Ruth Dillon, who then spent the day going around the tables getting to know both regular and new attendees—as she said, the fudge table was quite an attraction!



Even though the number of visitors was down this year, and sales were also low for some of our crafters, everyone loved the atmosphere and friendliness of our church, as always. I must admit there certainly is a 'buzz' on the day.

I would just like to thank all the willing volunteers who made the day run so smoothly. So thank you to the kitchen ladies and leaflet distributors, those who welcomed our customers and manned the various church tables, and to those who donated cakes or items for Bee's bric-a-brac table, as well as

all those who got us straight again ready for our Sunday church service.

Thanks also go to Jackie Cresswell and her Brownies, who ran a very successful Tombola stall. All proceeds went to *Step by Step*, the Aldershot based charity that helps homeless young people.

We also raised £1,400 for church charities, which is wonderful.

Thank you, and God bless you for your continued support. See you at the next fair on **4th November 2017**.

*Darrell Henderson*

## PRAYER FOR THE MONTH

In December 1997 newspapers reported that a five year old boy was reunited with his parents on Boxing Day after they had accidentally left him behind at a petrol station.

His parents had driven off in separate cars from a garage in Dunmow, Essex, without realising that their son, Kyle Collins, had gone into the shop to buy some sweets. The boy had slipped out of his mother's car while she paid for petrol, and when she returned she presumed that he had got into her husband's car. The parents left the petrol station separately and were driving for an hour before they heard a police appeal on the radio.



We are reminded of the family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph travelling to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, when Jesus was twelve years old. As with the Collins family, there was a mix up, and Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem without his parents realising.

The Sunday after Christmas is normally the 'Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph'.

### Let us pray:



God, who is our loving parent,  
we pray for all families,  
that members may feel encouraged to live fully,  
and may discover the sanctity of human love  
and the value of family life.

If times are troubled  
through separation or difficulties in relationships,  
may people learn to be generous.

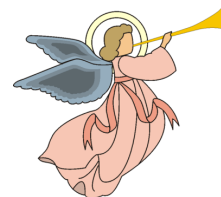
May we all learn how to break the cycle  
of whatever may be negative,  
growing in understanding and appreciation,  
and in love and respect.

*Amen*

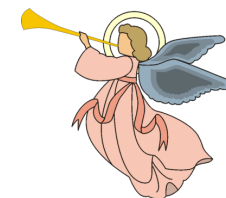
*Ruth*



## NATIVITY



The world's first Christmas: on that night  
All the sky with stars was bright;  
Angels crowded all the air,  
Watching for what would happen there.  
Joyful songs proclaimed the birth -  
God almighty here on earth!  
Shepherds, kneeling on the floor,  
Come to worship and adore,  
And the magi, drawn from far,  
Following his natal star,  
Brought their gifts of precious worth  
To the king of heaven and earth.  
Joseph then, with loving care,  
Stowed the gold and incense rare.  
Mary looked, with wondering eyes  
At the myrrh of sacrifice.  
Evermore felicity  
Springs from this nativity.



*Sheila Durbin*



## ATAXIA UK

One of our charities during 2017 is Ataxia UK. Some people have asked me what it is, and why we are collecting for them.

Ataxia is a lack of muscle coordination which may affect speech, eye movements, the ability to swallow, walk, pick up objects, and other voluntary movements. A person with persistent ataxia may have damage in the part of the brain that controls muscle coordination—the cerebellum.

Ataxia may have several causes, including multiple sclerosis, a head injury, stroke, cerebral palsy, a faulty gene, or a tumour. Although physiotherapy, speech therapy and occupational therapy may help, there is no known cure for this progressive and debilitating disease. The national support group, Ataxia UK, supports patients and relatives of those living with Ataxia.

Lisa Murphy is a lady in Fleet who has Ataxia, and although she cannot attend church because of her condition, I regularly visit her and she feels part of our church community.

*Ruth*



## NOMINATIONS FOR SYNOD APPOINTMENTS/ ROLES

One of the many good things about the United Reformed Church

is the way in which local churches come together to form Synods to support each other in their mission, and to do together those things that are best done in a wider forum.

The work of Wessex Synod is only possible because of the many Church Members and Elders who give their time to serve on Synod committees and groups, so that things get done. It is amazing to think that over 100 volunteers are involved in one way or another—sharing their gifts with the wider church.

But of course no one wants to do the same job forever, and so we normally ask people to take on a task for a period of four years; which means that every year we are looking for new people to bring their own unique gifts and insights.

Here are some areas of our work:

**Church and Society Group**—working on issues such as Fair Trade, poverty, racial justice, and climate change;

**World Church Group**—developing our links with congregations in France, Zambia, and elsewhere;

**Area Pastoral Committees**—developing strategies to deploy and support ministry, especially in times of change.

You can find out more about these and the other work we do by looking at the Synod website.

If you are interested in taking part in any way, or you know someone else who might find this a rewarding thing to do, please contact me via Ruth or Moray to find out more.

*Sue Brown (Wessex Synod Clerk)*



Phyllis  
Tuckwell  
Hospice

HART  
VOICES

### Carols by Candlelight

with Hart Voices and School Choirs  
at the Catholic Church of Our Lady  
Kings Road, Fleet

**Sunday, 11th December, at 5.30 pm**

**Tickets £12** (includes refreshments)

Available from the Hospice Shop in Fleet Road,  
by calling 683540, or online at [www.pthshop.co.uk](http://www.pthshop.co.uk)

More details available from **Vera Mosley** (684431)

## WORSHIPPING AS AN EXPAT

### Part 4: South Korea

*"I'm not sure I want to go to live in South Korea. I think it's time to go home to my family and church."*

*"But you have enjoyed all the other places we have lived in. You always had reservations but never regretted going."*

*"That's true. But what will life be in that part of the world? I'm really not sure we should go."*

That's the gist of many conversations Colin and I had in early 2001 when he told me that he had been offered the job in Seoul. He knew South Korea well and eventually persuaded me that we should go. So late one April evening in 2001 we flew into Seoul. It is a sight I will never forget. As we flew over the city all I could see were dozens of red, illuminated crosses which adorn the steeples of the churches. We were given a lovely apartment with the most magnificent view over Seoul. I immediately felt more relaxed about what my life would be like in this strange, far-off land.



Christianity was introduced into Korea by missionaries from China in the 16th century, but early converts suffered much persecution. However, from around the mid 1800s, when Korea began to open up to trading with Western countries, attitudes changed and followers of the Christian faith were more tolerated. However numbers remained small, and by the end of the war in 1945 only about 2% of the population were Christian. If we fast forward to today, about 30% of the population are Christian. So while we have seen a

steady decline in church membership in the UK, the opposite has happened in South Korea. Nothing illustrates this more than the Yoido Church in Seoul, which has 850,000 members with seven services every Sunday, translated into 16 languages. This church has the largest Pentecostal congregation in the world.



The Presbyterian Church I attended was more modest in size. It sat close to the British Embassy in the business district in Seoul. We had a minister from New Zealand, and services were held every Sunday morning with a format you would all find very familiar. The congregation was made up of many different nationalities, including many Koreans. Appropriate for this time of year, we held a Remembrance service and wore poppies. Our



minister gave one of the most moving renditions I have ever heard of John McCrae's poem 'In Flanders Fields'.

There were over 1,000 British soldiers killed during the Korean war (1950-53). There was a particularly famous battle where 750 soldiers of the Gloucestershire Regiment held back over 10,000 Chinese troops for four days,

which allowed the UN troops to withdraw to defend Seoul. Only 40 of the Gloucesters escaped safely, the others being killed or captured. Every year in April British veterans of the Korean War would return to the site of the battle to remember their fallen comrades. It was always very emotional to see the old soldiers marching over the bridge to the memorial, where a short service was held. Wreaths were then laid. Colin, as chairman of the British Chamber of Commerce in Korea, laid a wreath on behalf of the business community. The veterans then gave presents to local school children. After lunch we all accompanied the British Military Attaché to the hill where the battle had raged, where he gave a detailed account of the action. Some of the old soldiers would give a first-hand account of their experiences. It was an emotional day.

Korea is the home of the Moonies, the religious cult founded by the late Rev Dr Moon. He claimed to be the Messiah of the Second Coming and that his wife was the Holy Spirit. The cult is perhaps best known for the mass marriage ceremonies where 3,000 couples from all over the world would be married, most meeting each other for the first time just before the ceremony and often not having a common language. A couple of Moonies from the UK began attending our church services. They were very friendly, but you were always a bit suspicious of their intentions.

I had plenty of opportunity to take part in voluntary work. I had a 15 minute slot once a week on one of the radio stations. The idea was to let the audience hear spoken English, and to help them improve their language skills. I helped at the Seoul Help Centre, a kind of Citizens Advice Bureau for foreigners in Korea. Listening to the problems made me realise how lucky we were to be there with Shell looking after all our needs. I also spent time helping in an orphanage which had lots of babies waiting for adoption, and enjoyed going into Korean schools to help out with English conversation classes.



There was a close-knit expat community in Seoul, and there was no shortage of entertainment and social functions. I joined a choir organised by the Seoul International Women's Association. The members were from many countries, which ensured we had a varied repertoire. The British Ball was one of the social highlights of the year, and there were several garden parties held by the British Embassy, which were always well attended. The Embassy had a bar on a Friday evening which was always popular for the men after a week of trying to do business in Korea. Wives went along as well, of course! The British Chamber of Commerce held monthly events which Colin had to host.

However, the most memorable events for us were organised by the St Andrews Society. There were only a handful of Scots, but we managed to put on a Ball, a Ceilidh, and a Burns Supper, which were always very well attended. Colin and I both had the opportunity to be Chieftain, which kept us busy. Perhaps I am a little biased, but I think the Scottish events were the social highlights of the year!

After four very busy and happy years it came time for Colin to retire, and this time when we moved we really would be returning to Fleet. Of course we were glad to be coming home, but we would also miss the opportunities to live in countries with cultures so different from our own, as well as all the friends we had made and had to leave behind!

*Liz McClune*



## ADVENT QUIET DAY

Theme: The Scent of Love

Saturday, 3rd December, 10 am—4 pm

Beacon Hill United Reformed Church, Hindhead



There will be a time for quiet reflection, prayer areas, painting and a craft area. Cost: £10 for the day. Lunch is included.

**Come and be still and prepare for Advent and Christmas**

For more details:  
Contact the Hub at Beacon Hill URC,  
or email: [revrdillon@btinternet.com](mailto:revrdillon@btinternet.com)



## CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY



Dec16 © deborah noble • parishpump.co.uk

## COMMITMENT FOR LIFE



THANK YOU SO MUCH TO  
EVERYONE WHO SUPPORTED  
OUR 2016 FUNDRAISING  
CAMPAIGN.



THROUGH YOUR PRAYERS  
AND DONATIONS WE RAISED  
**£1,205**  
FOR COMMITMENT FOR LIFE.



*Tamyra Sherratt*  
Commitment for Life Link Person

You can donate at any time, using the CforL envelopes at the back of the church and placing in the offering at any service.



## AND ANOTHER THING....

### The Season of Giving

Christmas is coming, and we think about the gifts we can give. Here are some gifts we can give all year round, and which cost nothing at all!

**THE GIFT OF LISTENING:** But you must REALLY listen. No interrupting, no daydreaming, no planning your response. Just listening.

**THE GIFT OF A FAVOUR:** Every day, go out of your way to do something kind.

**THE GIFT OF A COMPLIMENT:** A simple and sincere, "You look great in red," "You did a super job," or "That was a wonderful meal" can make someone's day.

**THE GIFT OF A CHEERFUL DISPOSITION:** The easiest way to feel good is to extend a kind word to someone. Really, it's not that hard to say, "Hello" or "Thank you."

**THE GIFT OF AFFECTION:** Be generous with appropriate hugs, kisses, pats on the back, and handholds. Let these small actions demonstrate the love you have for family and friends.

(From the *Chet Valley Churches' Magazine*)

