

CHURCH CALENDAR JUNE—JULY 2015

June

7th	10 am	Family Worship led by Revd Ruth Dillon, with Parade
	6.30 pm	Evening Worship & Holy Communion led by Revd Ruth Dillon
14th	10 am	Family Worship led by Mrs Helen Everard
21st	10 pm	Family Worship & Holy Communion led by Revd Ruth Dillon
24th	7.30 pm	Elders Meeting
25th	8 pm	Film House Group at the Manse (see p 4)
26th	7.30 pm	Social Evening: <i>Beetle Drive</i>
28th	10 am	Family Worship led by Mr Ian Fletcher



July

1st	8 pm	Church Meeting
5th	10 am	Family Worship led by Revd Ruth Dillon/Revd Craig Bowman
	6.30 pm	Evening Worship & Holy Communion led by Revd Ruth Dillon
7th	2 pm	Prayer Time in the Church
12th	10 am	Family Worship led by Revd John Whitton
19th	10 am	Family Worship & Holy Communion led by Mr Peter Pay
21st	7.30 pm	Elders Meeting
23rd	8 am	Film House Group at the Manse
26th	10 am	Family Worship led by Mrs Maggie Bridgett

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.urc.org.uk, or with Assistant Administrator, Margaret Armes (650994).

Items for the August-September Newsletter should be with Christine Gibbons by **Sunday 12th July** (christine.gibbons@building-bridges.co.uk).

Fleet United Reformed Church

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

Newsletter



[70 years of Christian Aid—see page 9]

June-July 2015



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<i>Treasurer:</i>	John Gibbons , 01252 614200 jmgibbons@hotmail.com
<i>Hall Bookings:</i>	Brian Armes , 01252 650994 b.ames@ntlworld.com

SUNDAY WORSHIP

10 am: Family Worship
Holy Communion usually on third Sunday of month
First Sunday only: 6.30 pm Holy Communion

REGULAR WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

<i>Little Fishes:</i>) Sundays, 10 am
<i>Loaves and Fishes:</i>)
<i>House Group:</i>	Mondays, 10 am (at 35 Frere Ave, Fleet)
<i>Toddlers Group:</i>	Tuesdays, 10 am; Fridays, 10 am
<i>Pilots:</i>	Tuesdays, 4-5 pm
<i>Coffee Morning:</i>	Thursdays, 10–11.30 am

Under the umbrella of the United Reformed Church, *Brownie* and *Rainbow Units* meet each week during school term.
Further details of all these activities are available from the Church Office, from the Church Secretary, or on our website.

FROM THE MANSE



Dear Friends

As I write this pastoral letter a lot of things are whirling in my head: in fact this is my third draft, as I want to tell you so much about what I have learnt in recent days.

Ministers' Spring School is an occasion when URC ministers from Wessex Synod gather annually to learn, pray and reflect together.

The topic this year was '**Love Thy Neighbour, doing Justice and Mercy.**' Revd Dr Michael Jaggesar, who was Moderator of the URC General Assembly in 2014, conducted the Bible Studies, and we had speakers from the URC Church and Society Team and from the Joint Public Issues Team of the URC, Methodist and Baptist Churches.

Many memorable discussions and quotes were given during my time in Salisbury. However one resonated with me to the next event.

We were told that **compassion** is the key to unlocking discipleship and walking humbly with God.

Yet how do we attain compassion?

Does it come naturally?

How can a local Church become a compassionate community?

The speaker gave us five points to consider and recognise if we are to be a compassionate congregation:

The local community needs to be aware:

1. That we are a spiritual and prayerful church community;
2. That we are a non-judgemental church community;
3. That we are prepared to 'go the extra mile'.

The local community also needs to know:

4. That we all have a story to tell, about the God who gives love, hope and strength;
5. That we are not perfect.

All of these points stirred me, as I let each one rest and dwell in my heart.

I would suggest that each of us would want to adhere to these five points. However, there is a sixth point which for me came at the '**Growing the Church**' conference held at Basingstoke URC a couple of days later.

A question was posed to us: Why are we as Christians so hesitant to invite a friend, neighbour or stranger to our Church?

Many reasons were to do with fear.

Fear.... of putting people 'on the spot';

Fear.... of seeming pushy;

Fear.... of the questions they may put to us;
 Fear.... of having to answer those questions;
 Fear.... of being rejected;
 Fear.... of feeling a fool;
 Fear.... of embarrassment.

All the above—and many more—are the reasons WE do not invite people to come to church with us.

So we need to gain confidence in knowing the good news, and what God has done for us in our lives. Therefore my sixth point is:

6. The local community needs to be aware of our Hope and Trust in God; and that God is a God of Love who wants the absolute best for everyone.

If we can accept that fear and risk-taking is part of our story, then fear becomes the key to unlock potential, creativity and growth.

We sow and water the seeds, but it is God who gives growth and in this respect we must remain faithful to the values of God's kingdom.

Being authentic, being the Church, and not being afraid of living the gospel, means that we will automatically become a community of compassionate disciples.

Every blessing,
Ruth

'REEL ISSUES'

Film House Group



The film for June/July will be **Man Dancin'**. Jimmy Kerrigan is a Glaswegian hard-man who, after nine years in Jail, is desperate to go straight despite pressure from his old gangland boss.

Following his release from prison, his 'anger management' classes see him playing Jesus in the annual church passion play. With the help of Father Flynn, Jimmy throws himself into the play with a fervour no one expects, a decision that is to have dramatic repercussions for the entire community.

Next meeting is on **Thursday, 25th June, at 8 pm** at the Manse.

GUEST PREACHER IN JULY

The Revd Craig Bowman will be conducting morning worship on **5th July**. He is the Secretary for Ministries in the URC, and is based at Church House in London.

Mr Bowman has had ministries in Swindon and Exmouth, and has been in his current ministry since 2008.



NOTICE BOARD



YOUTH CAMP

Ruth will be leading Bible studies on 'Valuing' at the Wessex Youth Camp from **Friday 17th July to Sunday 19th July**.

Prayers for the children and young people of the Wessex Synod have been requested for that weekend.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Church membership discussions will be commencing in September.

If you would like to consider membership, or transferring your membership from another church to Fleet URC, then please contact Ruth or Moray.

FACCTS

FACCTS held their AGM on 28th April, when all the current directors were re-elected.

A member of the team will be speaking during the morning service on 7th June.

(A fuller report to follow)



OPEN HOUSE AT THE MANSE

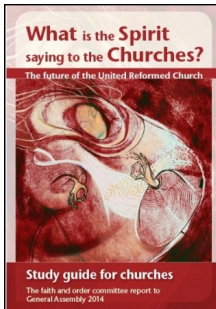
The annual Open House at the Manse will be held on **Saturday 22nd August, from 2 pm to 8 pm**.

Please bring something for the 'table' (sweet or savoury), and Ruth will provide tea, coffee and other liquid refreshments!

Everyone welcome.

THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH

This issue has been much discussed during the past four years by General Assembly, where it is acknowledged that many members are finding the changing social situation and attitudes difficult to understand and face. What **is** the future of the United Reformed Church?



General Assembly have published a study guide called '*What is the Spirit saying to the Churches?*' In it they ask that we regain confidence in our faith in a God who continues to be greater than we can imagine, who embraces, surprises and challenges us. The guide is available to download from the Faith and Order section of the Resources Library on the URC website (just click 'Visit Resource').

A group of us recently attended a Synod conference at London Road URC, Basingstoke, which was entitled '*Growing the Church*'. Again it was reiterated that we

should have faith in God to guide us. We were given several examples of mission work currently being undertaken, and made aware of the support networks that are available to help. The keynote speaker also invited us to develop a 'culture of invitation' in our churches, ie to be more than just a welcoming church.

Ruth Dillon, our Minister, will be leading the Eldership as they explore the future of the church, looking at what is special about the URC, and how we can develop. What is recognised is that the URC is conciliatory in discerning the mind of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit in the community of believers, through worship, prayer, studying the scriptures, and Church Meeting.

This work is important to the future of the church and the eldership do need your support. Please pray that in our deliberations we can discern the will of God; but also do make your views known to the Elders and help us produce a resolution for a future Church Meeting.

God bless,

Moray Henderson, Church Secretary

MONTHLY PRAYER GROUP

Following on from my reflection on prayer in the AGM report, I will be holding a monthly Prayer Time in the church on the first Monday of every month, commencing on **Monday 7th July at 2 pm**. It will be for 30 minutes.

During this time we will uphold before God those people and situations in need of prayer. This will be a quiet time of prayer, and all are welcome to come and join me.

Ruth

LITTLE FISHES

The Little Fishes have had lots of fun recently learning about the Good Samaritan. We shared the story that Jesus told of the kind stranger who was the only person to stop and help. We bandaged our toys to make them better and we even recreated a scene from the story with food...



Our scene took place on a digestive biscuit spread with soft cheese. A lettuce path passed between celery rocks. A small stick of carrot represented the man on his journey, and some pieces of pepper showed the robbers. It was a delicious way to enjoy the story!

We have also learnt about Jesus' appearance to his friends on the road to

Emmaus. We went on a short journey round the hall, trying to walk sadly and then happily, once we knew that Jesus was alive! We recorded our journey by stepping in some multi-coloured paint and printing our footprints along a paper road. We also made some cardboard flip-flops to take home with us!

Grace Bagshaw



PILOTS ON SAFARI

Pilots groups from all over the country enjoyed a wonderful day out when they met together on 16th May at West Midlands Safari and Leisure Park.

Our Fleet Pilots' party, consisting of Bee, Mary, Saju, Melvin, Mahima, Hannah, William, Val and Charlie (Val's grandson), joined a large party of young people from Woking URC on the coach for an early start to our long journey.

Once there, we went to the Treetops Pavilion to leave our Pilots banner and collect our wristbands. We then boarded the coach again and set off on our safari drive, where we saw animals from many parts of the world (rhinos, zebras, giraffes, elephants, wild dogs, white lions, cheetahs—and many other species).





At the end of our safari drive we left the coach and headed to the adventure park—much to the children's excitement! Our first stop was the sea lion show, followed by Charlie and William scaling the climbing rock wall while the rest of our party enjoyed their picnic lunch. Our group then moved on to the amusement rides, where we all had fun on the wild water rafting—which resulted in a few wet bottoms! This was followed by a visit to the looping pirate ship, where Hannah joined Charlie and William on the ride.

Later, some of our party attended worship in the pavilion, where a live band accompanied the singing. The story of Jonah and the whale was read to the attendees. Afterwards we had a short time to visit the twilight cave, inhabited by many small animals and numerous bats on the wing.

Then it was time to make our way back to the coach for the journey home. We all agreed that we had had a tiring, but thoroughly enjoyable day of fun and fellowship. The glorious sunshine was an added blessing!

Many thanks to Bee for organising the trip.

Val Cox



CHRISTIAN AID WEEK (1)

The Cake and Plant sale held at the beginning of Christian Aid week raised £903.94! This is an amazing result, so many thanks to all who contributed in any way, whether by baking cakes, supplying plants, or just turning up on the day to enjoy the sale and fellowship.

The following evening we had a very good service at the Church on the Heath, inspiring us all to pound the pavements and try to collect as much as we could for Christian Aid Week. Collectors from our church raised the combined sum of £878.17, so a big thank you to everyone who volunteered to go out with the envelopes or collecting boxes.

We will let you know the grand total for our area when we receive it.

Linda Storey & Liz McClune



CHRISTIAN AID WEEK (2)

2015 marks Christian Aid's 70th anniversary: 70 years of working for a fairer world. In a special service on 10th May, Nicola Hamilton and Tamyra Sherratt traced the history of Christian Aid since 1944, when an organisation called 'Christian Reconstruction in Europe' was set up to raise funds to help churches throughout Europe. That organisation became 'Christian Aid' in 1964.

During the service our young people enacted the story of Loko, who lives in a remote part of Ethiopia and has to walk for several hours a day to collect firewood to support her children. Christian Aid is giving women like Loko cows and training so they can earn a better income.

Afterwards our Pilots invited people to fill a special display with coins. They wanted to raise enough money to buy some cows for Ethiopia. They also invited people to guess how much they would collect.



Their appeal ran for 10 days, and raised £208.23. Marion Brown and Oscar Booker both guessed £200, and came closest to the right answer. The church has offered to make this sum up to £300—enough to buy two cows. Well done, Pilots!

Bee Griffiths

(There are more photos on the church website and Facebook page.)



NOTICE OUTSIDE A CHURCH:

Worn out? Come in for a Service!

This church is not just four weddings and a funeral.

REPORT FROM URC MISSION COUNCIL REGARDING MARRIAGE OF SAME-SEX COUPLES

Mission Council met during May to discuss issues and matters concerning the life of the United Reformed Church.

The marriage of same-sex couples was discussed, and Mr John Ellis, Moderator of the General Assembly, stressed that this piece of business had been deemed urgent by the moderators. The consultation had run its course, and the Church expected Mission Council to respond to the results.

Mr Ellis added: "Today is not about rehearsing the debate already heard at General Assembly (in 2014)... it is about considering and finalising the resolution that will be considered by General Assembly."



Elizabeth Caswell, convenor of the human sexuality task group, presented the paper and thanked Wessex Synod for their initial work on the Resolution. As expected, the discussion that followed was protracted, lively and detailed. Many questions were asked and several suggestions made regarding small amendments to the

Resolution. The overall mood was calm, positive, and respectful. After minor adjustments Mission Council resolved to commend Resolution to General Assembly, and the Resolution was passed (full text below), recognising disagreement.

The Resolution:

- A. In keeping with the 2007 commitment on Human Sexuality, General Assembly does not consider it appropriate to express a single view on behalf of the whole United Reformed Church on the matter of Same Sex Marriage.
- B. General Assembly declares that the Church Meeting of each Local Church of the United Reformed Church in England and Wales is the relevant governing authority for the purpose of giving consent for the trustees of its building to seek the registration of that building for religious marriage ceremonies of same-sex couples, in accordance with the provisions of Section 26A (1) of the Marriage Act 1949, as amended by the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013.
- C. In the case of Local Ecumenical partnerships and Union Churches, where the constitution makes no provision for a Church or Congregational Meeting (including a Special or Extraordinary General Meeting), the relevant governing authority of the United Reformed Church under Section 26A(1) of the Marriage Act 1949 as

amended by the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 is the council which represents the widest gathering of members of that Church or Partnership. In case of doubt, the council to act in this matter shall be jointly determined, in the light of the LEP constitution and any sharing agreement by the moderator and clerk of the synod on which that Church is represented.

- D. Noting that Mission Council has already recognised, on behalf of General Assembly, 'that if a future Assembly were to allow for ministers and members of the United Reformed Church to solemnise same-sex marriages under Scots Law, the Synod of Scotland would be the appropriate council of the URC to approach the Registrar General for Scotland', the General Assembly confirms that it now lies within the competence of the National Synod of Scotland to nominate under Section 9(1A) of the Marriage (Scotland) Act 1977 as amended by the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2014 members of the United Reformed Church who have indicated their willingness in writing to the Synod to be approved celebrants of same sex marriage in Scotland.
- E. The General Assembly recalls that the trusts on which local church buildings are commonly held empower the Church Meeting to direct in what ways such a building is or is not to be used for public worship and ancillary purposes.
- F. The General Assembly authorises the General Secretary, the Clerk, or any Deputy General Secretary to sign and furnish a copy of this Resolution (or a relevant extract) in the name of the Assembly, whenever such a copy may be required by law.

General Assembly has been recalled for one day on Saturday 27th June 2015 for this Resolution.

Ruth



CHURCHES TOGETHER IN FLEET AND CHURCH CROOKHAM

Report from a Committee Meeting on 13th May 2015

Environment and Faith: The following events were brought to churches' attention, with a request that they be supported.



1. There will be a mass climate change lobby on Parliament on 17th June.
2. The Church on the Heath has achieved the Eco-congregation Award and Fairtrade status.
3. The Christian Theatre Company *Riding Lights* will stage 'Baked Alaska', a production about climate change, in Sept/Oct in Fleet.
4. 1st November has been designated International Day of Prayer for Climate Change.

Lent Course: 160 people attended the recent Lent course. The post code method of allocating people to churches worked well, except for the Church on the Heath, where everyone went to the same church!

National Prayer Weekend, 25-27th September: Churches are asked to engage in prayer with their communities, seeking prayer requests from local people, organisations and institutions.

Elizabeth Brightwell, Minute Secretary, has volunteered to go to Israel/Palestine for the period 15th July to 19th October as an Accompanier. She may accompany Palestinian children to school, which means that they may be less likely to have stones thrown at them; or she may go with adults at check points so that they may have less hassle and difficulty in getting through. She would value our prayers for herself, and for those she will be helping.

Jill Durbin



Phyllis
Tuckwell
Hospice

Our next event for Phyllis Tuckwell is the
Fleet Street Collection on 20th June,
followed by a stall at the
Dogmersfield Fete on 28th July.

Please also note the
Hartley Wintney Fete on 13th June,
where we are helping to run a Tombola.
This is a very good Fete, and is well supported with
vintage cars, tug of war, and lots of stalls.

All profit from the Tombola will go to the Hospice.

Vera Mosley

SUN RISING

This morning the entrancing early light
Gave to the brown beech hedge a vivid glow
And cast its magic over plain brick walls.
But as the sun rose so the light moved on
To cast its radiance over other scenes.
"Walk in light," said Jesus, "while you may."
And so we must strive to follow the light,
To live in the light, be transformed by the light,
Till we enter the glory of heaven.

Sheila Durbin

PRAYER FOR THE MONTH

King Robert the Bruce of Scotland had been defeated in battle and was pursued by his enemies. He hid in a cave and thought over his defeat and his difficulties. He had little hope left, and thought he should give up the struggle.

At that moment he saw a spider dangling by a long thread. It was trying to climb back up to its web, but kept falling back. The spider persevered and eventually succeeded in what it had set out to do.

King Robert the Bruce often told this story to remind others of the lesson he learnt from the spider—to 'stick with it' even when there are setbacks.

He died on 7th June 1329, having secured his lifetime dream of an independent Scotland.

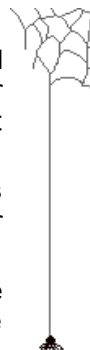


Let us pray:

Lord, show me how to learn from others,
how to be patient,
and how to persevere.

Amen

Ruth





HART FOODBANK

Some church members have enquired about the present state of the Hart Foodbank. They have heard that the Foodbank asked for monetary donations instead of food, and wondered whether they should still bring food donations to the church. The answer is that we should continue to donate food in the usual way.

The confusion has arisen because the Foodbank had to vacate the premises where their central store was located. Since then the charity has been searching for suitable new accommodation and food donations are being stored temporarily in an extra large storage container, with some small extra storage in Fleet Methodist Church. This, however, is not suitable for their ongoing needs.

Despite this situation the Foodbank is still providing food supplies to those in identified need.

The reason for suspending the food donations for one month and requesting funds was because the Hart Foodbank needs regular funds to survive. Since January 2015 the Foodbank has for the first time needed to raise funds to pay for the permanent storage of food in a central store. The Foodbank Manager has estimated this cost to be around £6,000 per annum. She discussed the fundraising month with the Management Committee, Churches Together, and with the Trussell Trust Regional Manager. It is quite normal for any other of the 430 food banks to have regular fundraising initiatives, and Hart Foodbank is no exception. In future they will be considering a variety of fundraising ideas, eg applying for grants, fundraising events, and partnerships with businesses.



The fact that food was being provided to certain Day Centres for the homeless and needy, and to CAB, Fleet Lions and Besom was interpreted by some in our church as an indication that the Foodbank had surplus food. This is not the case. The Foodbank has always provided food to those in dire need, and these other organisations also give advice on job applications and training, as well as providing a hot meal to those who attend the Centre. This provision of food is in line with the fundamental principles of foodbanks.

If anyone is aware of ground floor secure storage space of approximately 500 sq ft at a reasonable rental cost, the Foodbank would be very grateful for the information. Please contact me and I will pass on the details.

Bill Thomas

AND ANOTHER THING.... Darrell sets us a Challenge

A Question for You

The other day a thought crossed my mind. You see Moray and I have at last joined the 'smart phone' fraternity. Trying out the connections, I typed in "*What sort of Christian am I?*" (Don't know why, but I did.)

I read several entries, then gave up and made a cup of tea and had a think.

I know I believe in God, I know I read the Bible, and of course I go to our church and work with the young people (which is the icing on the cake for me.)

But really, *what sort am I?*

Am I a Fair Weather Christian? This is a bit like a fair weather friend, one who believes and even thinks they believe. When all is well God is wonderful, but then they blame God and turn against God when things become difficult and hard going. I really don't think that's true of me; I hope that's not me.

Then there is the Bad Weather Christian, the opposite kind—those who cling to a float in rough waters; but when it is calm they let go and bob along carefree, not caring about God when all is well, only when they are in trouble and need. Oh please don't let that be me!



So what sort would I like to be? Well, I want to be the sort of Christian who is able to forgive and to accept people for what they are. I want to be the Christian who turns to God with thanks for all the good things in my life. I want to be the sort of Christian who turns to God for direction when I need it, and then, without doubting, accepts God's decision even when my prayer cannot be granted.

One thing I do know is that—no matter what happens—God is with me, and supports me in my life. I hope God will teach me to be a good Christian.

So my question to you is: "*What sort of Christian are you?*"

Darrell Henderson

