# InTouch

Winter 2019



The magazine of
Fleet United Reformed Church

# FLEET UNITED REFORMED CHURCH



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# **CHURCH CONTACTS**

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#### SUNDAY WORSHIP

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

### REGULAR ACTIVITIES

'Footsteps' Young People's Group: Sundays, 10 am (term time only)

House Group: Mondays, 10 am (Not meeting at present)

Prayer Group:See page 5 for detailsBible Study:See page 5 for detailsCoffee Morning:Thursdays, 10–11.30 am

Toddlers Group: Fridays, 10 am

Under the umbrella of the United Reformed Church, *Guide, 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

Christmas can be a strange time of the year.

For many it is joyful, but for others it is a sad occasion; for some an excuse for excess, and for others an experience of loneliness. We live in a world of light and darkness, and at Christmas we seek out the light so we can cope with the darkness.

There may have been a number of events over the last twelve months that have caused anxiety or stress, or joy and celebrations.

Personally, there have been a few incidences which have caused me to reflect on the darkness that surrounds us. The refugee crisis spreading throughout all of Europe, calling into question the core EU principle of solidarity; the terrorist attacks on innocent civilians throughout the world, especially in India—these are all reminders of that darkness.

Our world is increasingly unstable, insecure and fragmented. Our universe has become disenchanted, a cold and empty place seemingly indifferent to the plight of people. And yet, the whole point of Christmas is to bring out the warm, caring and loving character of humanity and of our world, and to be reminded once again that these dimensions are inspired by the birth of the Christ-child in Bethlehem.

Christmas is about the birth of God in the form of a child, the advent of God in the humanity of Jesus, the entry of God into our world, the adoption of God of planet earth—summed up in the Gospel of John as the eternal 'Word of God made flesh' in Jesus. The Incarnation of God 2,000 years ago is not just a one-off event: instead it is an enduring reality, reminding us that God is incarnate in every human being, in all creatures, in creation itself. If only we would 'open our eyes', if we would 'listen' to the cry of the poor and the earth, if we would 'take time out' to be still and mindful and if we would 'look around' at the wonder and beauty of the world.

The underlying message of Christmas is that the earth is a sacred place and not a profane place. Our beautiful planet is the dwelling place of the Spirit of God and the home of the Word incarnate.

Some of you may be familiar with the poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning, writing over 100 years ago:

'Earth's crammed with heaven, and every common bush afire with God, but only he who sees takes off his shoes'

Gerard Manley Hopkins could point out:

'The world is charged with the grandeur of God.'

If we can 'see' the energy of the Spirit in nature, and 'hear' the Word of God in the words of human beings, and 'discern' the action of the Holy Spirit in the creative stirrings of the human spirit, there is a chance that together we may be able to heal the planet and hand over a safer place to the next generation.

# Prayer:

### Babe of Bethlehem,

be with us as we gaze into your infant face,

### Prince of Peace.

anoint us with grace so that we may be true peacemakers in the world,

# King of Kings

enable us by your Spirit to be faithful disciples and serve you day by day,

### Wonderful Counsellor,

be with us in every step we take, so we may love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day.

### Amen

Finally, as we come to the end of 2019 and approach 2020, I would like to wish you and your family Christmas blessings.

Ruth, Hannah and William xxx



#### GENERAL ASSEMBLY MODERATOR



Revd Nigel Uden, the General Assembly Moderator, will be preaching at Fleet URC on **Sunday**, **23rd February 2020**, when Fleet URC will be joining with Beacon Hill URC for the Sunday morning worship.

Revd Nigel Uden used to be my minister at St Anne's URC, North West Synod, and 22 years ago he encouraged me to enter stipendiary ministry.

Please put this date in your diary to welcome the General Assembly Moderator of the United Reformed Church. *Ruth* 

# SUMMARY OF PALANI VISIT

Inside this magazine you will find a summary of Ruth, Bee and Val's visit to Palani in October 2019. You can also see more photos and videos from the trip on the church website (www.fleet.urc.org.uk, under /Mission/Palani Mission).



There will be a service in early 2020 when we can share more memories, and answer questions.





# MONTHLY PRAYER GROUP

The monthly Prayer Group will meet at 12 noon on the



following dates in the vestry at Fleet URC:

Monday 2nd December Monday 6th January Monday 10th February

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



# **MONTHLY BIBLE STUDY**

Each month we meet in the Vestry to explore the Lectionary readings for the following Sunday. There will be no Bible Study in December. The next meetings will be at **2 pm** on:

Monday 13th January Monday 17th February

# **ANNUAL & STUDY LEAVE**

Ruth, our Minister, will not be available on the following dates:

9th—10th December (Study in Cambridge)

26th December—2nd January (Annual leave)

31st January—8th February (Annual leave)

**26th—28th February** (Study in Cambridge)

# FROM LINDA & JIM STOREY

Thank you to everyone for their acts of kindness and support following Linda's recent heart attack and ongoing recovery. We have been touched by the care and good wishes we have received.

Thank you so much.

### **HELP URGENTLY NEEDED**

A message from Hannah Fernie of the URC Baby & Toddler Group:

We are looking for volunteers to join the kitchen team that supports the URC Baby and Toddler group, which runs every Friday morning from 10—11 am in the church hall.

Please contact us if you are interested in helping us, or know someone who might be, and we can give you more information.

We are a lovely bunch: we like to natter, and of course tea and biscuits is included! Many thanks in advance.

Hannah Fernie, tel: 07917 412722, or email: musicbyfernie@googlemail.com





# TO ALL OUR ANGEL KNITTERS:



I will be knitting and collecting angels up to the Service of Blessing, which will be on **Sunday, 8th December** at St Philip & St John, starting at 5 pm. This will be part of their special service following the Christmas Tree Festival. I hope you will be able to come along to bless these lovely angels before they go on their way.

The main distribution day is **Saturday**, **14th December**. We are invited to distribute in our usual area in the town. This task needs to be completed by 7 am! Anyone wishing to help, please meet us between Church Road and the

south entrance to Hart Shopping Centre at 6 am. Wrap up warm!

Please let me know if you wish to join Moray and me. Lifts can be arranged.

Darrell Henderson





# Fleet Choral Society with Graham Hix and Friends

# CHRISTIAN AID CAROL CONCERT

Tuesday, 10th December at 7.30 pm

St Philip & St James Church, Kings Road, Fleet

£7 entry on Door Under 16s Free



Fleet Rotary
with the NE Hants
Area Schools Band
& Church Crookham
Junior School Choir

# **CAROL SERVICE**

at the Church on the Heath Elvetham Heath, Fleet

Thursday, 5th December at 7.30 pm

Retiring Collection, (ALL proceeds to local Rotary charities)

Hot drinks and mince pies.





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Fleet URC
CAROLS AND
CHRISTINGLE

Led by Revd Ruth Dillon

Sunday 22nd December at 4 pm

Everyone Welcome

# **CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT**

with Hart Voices & School Choirs

Sunday 8th December, at 5.30 pm

at the Church of Our Lady, Kings Road, Fleet

Tickets £12 (includes refreshments)
Available from the Hospice Shop,
by calling 683540,
or online at www.pthshop.co.uk



Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice





#### PRAYER OF THE MONTH

During Christmas and New Year many people will be travelling around the country. This prayer remembers people who will be travelling to friends and family, those who are travelling to new jobs, and those travelling homeward.

While London's rapid transport system is called the 'Underground' or the 'Tube', the system in Paris is known as the 'Metro'.

11th January 1863 is the anniversary of the opening of the world's first underground railway system in London. London Underground is the world's longest—over 250 miles (400 kms) in length.

Let us pray for all who will be making journeys today:



# We pray, Lord:

- For those who are going to a new job, and for those who are going to work for the last time today;
- For the emergency services who will travel at high speed on land, water or in the air, to bring help to others;
- For those starting a new life as they move house;
- For those travelling to or from prison;
- For people who will go into hospital today;
- For young people on their way to school, college and university;
- For those who are lost on the journey of life;
- For those who will die today and make their final journey;

On all these people we ask your blessing, Lord.

Amen

Ruth



# A BOOK TO READ, OR VIDEO TO WATCH DURING ADVENT

During Advent we shall be lighting a candle each week on the Advent wreath. We shall be using words from 'A Christmas Carol', by Charles Dickens, alongside familiar Scripture readings.

If you have not read this children's classic, or it was a long time ago, then please consider reading it or watching it during the Advent season.



# **EXPECTATION**



How lovely it is to see the wind Ruffling conifers, swaying eucalyptus, Stirring in the stiff upright holly, Though the frost is keen, the cold bitter, ('Specially if you've been out already) Sitting in a warm room that is bright With the clear, pale sunshine of winter, Drinking tea and waiting for the postman Who will surely bring Christmas cards, Not circulars or bills or adverts, On this day, this auspicious day Of sun and wind and waiting for Christmas.

Sheila Durbin



# **JEAN'S JOTTINGS: 'Pigeon Fancy'**

There I was, reading Bear Grylls's biography, when on looking up out of the window, what do I see?

Two pigeons, 'making up' to one another. They carried on for 20 minutes! First, they pecked each others' beaks, and then he pecked away at her neck. When he stopped she nudged him, and off he would go again. I decided not to worksh, it was love



would go again. I decided not to watch—it was lovely in its own sweet way. They were totally immersed in each other, and it just went on—and on.

Then suddenly he noticed another bird on the roof of a house, and off he flew. Fluttered his feathers, waved his tail feathers at her, like they do, and to his dismay she flew off!! I think she was late for something.

The smile was quickly wiped from his lovely face and he was left, dejected, alone and forlorn—until the next bird happens along... to be continued...

Jean Schafer

# PADDINGTON'S PILGRIMAGE—Greetings Letter

Do you remember when Paddington Bear came to visit us here at Fleet URC? It was back in November 2017, and we were the first to receive him on his pilgrimage around the congregations of Wessex Synod. While he was with us he participated in a morning service, a



baptism, coffee morning, house group, choir practice, and he also went to see the Brownies. Paddington helped to launch the Walking the Way initiative, and invited us to think about how we welcome the stranger; he also challenged us in our work with young people.

Paddington is still on his journey around Wessex Synod, but in the meantime he has sent us the following letter by way of a 'thank you' note.

# Dear friends,

Thank you very much for welcoming me into your church. I had a lovely time, and Aunt Lucy is relieved that I stayed with such amazing people.

As I continue my pilgrimage, I wanted to ask you how my visit and the questions I asked have affected your work with children and young people. I would love to hear of new ways you are welcoming and encouraging the children and youth in and around your church.

After telling Aunt Lucy about my trip she questioned if the church encouraged me on the path of discipleship, to grow and spread God's word.



I told her that I felt very encouraged and have indeed shared my faith with others. I'm interested to know how you do this for other people too?!

I really look forward to receiving your replies and hearing how my visit has impacted on your work. From Paddington Bear Paddington's friends, the Children's Youth and Development Officers, have also sent a note:

The response to Paddington's Pilgrimage has been amazing, and the many entries in his journal are very encouraging—there is so much to give thanks for in the variety of church lives across the Synod.

We would love to hear your responses to Paddington's latest request and encourage you to send them to the following email address:

development@urcwessex.org.uk (subject line: Paddington Follow Up); or post to 120 Alma Road, Southampton, SO14 6UW

Can we also remind you about our Facebook page, where you can follow the latest updates on Paddington's Pilgrimage, together with other information and opportunities relating to children and youth work:

Facebook.com/urcwessex.childrenandyouth/



# **WESSEX SYNOD YOUTH MEETING**

On the weekend of 16th/17th November Mahima and I attended a Synod Youth meeting at Winchester Holiday Inn. The day began with welcomes and introductions to everyone who attended. The main part of the meeting was how we were going to prepare for up and coming youth events, as well as providing new concepts and ideas to make the experience more enjoyable.



Later that day we were lucky enough to go to the Winchester Science Museum and Planetarium, which is said to be the largest planetarium in England.

The weekend was a great opportunity to meet people from other churches and share ideas, and we'd like to thank the church for enabling us to go.

Melvin Saju Kadeckal



### **CRAFT & GIFT FAIR**

This popular annual event again ran smoothly, even though the heavens opened and the winds blew, and England was playing against South Africa at rugby (enough said on that subject!)

Due to the bad weather Moray did a sterling job ferrying people to and from the designated car park. This released the church car park for the customers to use, which was very much needed as a few times we were full to the brim and people had to park in the side roads.

Over 270 people came through the door, and even though a lot of the crafters were the same as in



previous years, everything looked brighter, especially when the sun came out and shone through our windows. I had four people comment on the lovely flowers that were in the church, and how they shone as well.

A big thanks to Steve English for his hard work with bacon butties and two delicious homemade soups. Our catering ladies welcomed everyone with a smile—and of course the wonderful cakes!

Thank you also to everyone who helped—on the welcome table, taking money for the kitchen, table collecting and clearing, and putting everything back ready for Sunday morning service.

Bee again did wonders on her stall, and also with the selling of goods for the Palani charity.

As you know, this was my last year organising the event, and it has been such a joy over the years. I have met and made friends with lots of crafters. The good news is that it will happen again next year. Carol Rayner has taken up the reins, with the help of Moira Bamfield and Chris Porter. If anyone would like to be a part of the 2020 event, please see Carol.

I will close now with more thanks to you. Thank you to everyone who has helped, encouraged and supported me over the past years. I have had a wonderful time and I know I will miss it.

God bless

Darrell Henderson



### I'M DREAMING OF A GREEN CHRISTMAS

Christmas should be a joyful time of year, celebrating the birth of Christ, but all too many people find it stressful and expensive! We love to follow traditions... we eat 'traditional' foods, decorate our homes with trees and tinsel and baubles and give each other gifts. Many of these 'traditions' are Victorian in origin, although some have roots deeper in history. By taking a greener approach to Christmas, some of our modern stresses can be alleviated. Perhaps some of the following tips might help you to create 'new' green traditions.

- 1. Don't buy people 'things' for the sake of it. Money Saving Expert Martin Lewis calls it 'tit for tat' buying... one person buys a present for another, who feels obliged to respond in a similar fashion (even though they may not be able to afford it, or would prefer to save their money). These kind of gifts may be unwanted or ill-considered and may end up in landfill. Sometimes the greatest gift is releasing someone from the obligation of having to give to you. Beware 'Secret Santas' too. I have opted out of mine!
- 2. Choose gifts with care! Anna Lappe, an American author and educator, says that, "Every time you spend money you're casting a vote for the kind of world you want." If you buy cheap, novelty items that will keep people entertained for a few minutes before they break, you are voting for a cheap, throw -away world. Buy ethically and with care. Buy items that will last. Buy items that are truly wanted. Buy second hand. Buy experiences over 'things'.
- Make a New Year's resolution to spend your money wisely in 2020! Vote with the pound in your pocket for the kind of world you want. Think twice before buying anything! Use





what you have first, borrow from a friend, swap with someone else, thrift or buy second hand, or even make your own. Buying should be your last option. 'Earth Overshoot Day' is the date in any given year when humanity's use of natural resources exceeds what the Earth can regenerate in one year. In 2019 it was 1st August. In 1970 we used up one earth's world of resources in one year. In 2015 it was 1.6 Earth's worth of resources. By 2030 it will be two Earth's worth of resources, if we don't change the way we 'consume'. Let's try to make 2020 a greener year for ourselves and the planet!

#### **COVENANT SERVICE REFLECTION**

I am no longer my own but yours.
Put me to what you will,
rank me with whom you will;
put me to doing, put me to suffering;
let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you,
exalted for you, or brought low for you;
let me be full, let me be empty,
let me have all things, let me have nothing:

I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal.

And now, glorious and blessèd God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you are mine and I am yours.

And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven.

#### Amen

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On **Sunday 5th January** we shall be having a covenant service. The richness of this Methodist tradition has filtered down within the URC, and now many URC churches hold this service within the first few weeks of the New Year.

It is a celebration of all that God has done, and an affirmation that we give our lives and choices to God. It is an invitation for people to renew their covenant relationship with God, and most churches hold the service at the beginning of the New Year.

The aim of the service is to help people hear God's offer and God's challenge; to provide space for God to prompt and for people to respond. Yet, it is more than this, for the Covenant Service is not just a one-to-one transaction between an individual and God, it is an act of the whole faith community. What God offers through the Covenant is a loving relationship. It is not a business contract set up between God and humanity for the provision of certain goods and services. Rather, it is the means of grace by which we accept the relationship God offers and then seek to sustain it:

The days are sure coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant... I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Jeremiah 31: 31, 33 (NRSV)

These words are read out as part of the Covenant Service. The focal point of the service is the Covenant Prayer (above). It embraces the whole of life, in all its parts. Most people find it quite tough to say this and really mean it. It is uncomfortable and challenging. It asks questions of our faith and demands that we examine our relationship with God.

The Covenant Prayer has been compared by some to a set of New Year resolutions, but ones that emphasise the importance of doing and being as much as believing. But more than that, the prayer represents a commitment to being a disciple and putting God first in our lives and in everything about our lives: what we do, what we say and who we are. It is both a surrender to, and a trust in, God. The final few words are a gracious reminder: 'You are mine and I am yours'. We don't pray and live just in our own strength—but in God's.

Ruth



### **WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 2020**



I am sure you will all be thinking of obtaining your new diaries, so I thought I would give you a date.

**Friday, 6th March 2020** is the date of our World Day of Prayer services.

The morning service will be hosted by Church Crookham Baptist Church at 10 am, with refreshments after the service.

The evening service will be hosted by us here at Fleet URC, starting at 7.30 pm, also with refreshments following the service.

This year the service has been written and prepared by the Christian Women of Zimbabwe, who will call us to 'Rise! Take up your Mat and Walk!'

I will of course give you more information nearer the date. (By the way, the Zimbabwe biscuits are yummy!)

Darrell Henderson



# **GLUTEN FREE DUNDEE CAKE**

At the recent Craft Fair several people asked me for the recipe of the glutenfree Dundee cake which was my contribution to the refreshments. So I have pleasure in reproducing it here:

# Ingredients:

125 g unsalted butter

125 g brown caster sugar

150 g 'Doves' gluten free self-raising flour

1 tsp GF baking powder

1/4 tsp GF xantham gum

1 tsp vanilla essence

2 tbs milk (non dairy if preferred)

3 medium eggs

100 g glacé cherries (halved)

400 g mixed dried fruit

100 g mixed dried fruit

100 g candied mixed peel

125 g whole blanched almonds

Prepare a 1 lb loaf tin or a round 8 ins diameter cake tin lined with greaseproof paper. Preheat the oven to 150°C.



Mix together the flour, xantham gum and baking powder in one bowl. In another bowl, put all the dried fruit with the cherries and add 1 dessertspoon of GF flour and thoroughly mix together to ensure that all the fruit is separated.

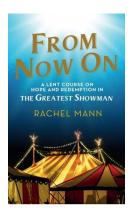
In a mixing bowl cream the butter and sugar, beating until light and fluffy. Beat in the 3 eggs one by one, together with some of the flour mixture, adding the remaining flour together with the vanilla essence and milk, and beating to get a smooth mixture.

Finally, add the floured fruit, mixing so that it is completely combined. Then place the mixture in the prepared tin, smoothing to an even finish. Arrange the whole almonds evenly on top, and place in the preheated oven. Bake for  $2\frac{1}{2} - 2\frac{3}{4}$  hours. Test with a cocktail stick in the centre of the cake—it will be ready when the cocktail stick comes out clean.

Pam Hasted



### **LENT COURSE 2020**



During Lent 2020 we shall be following the themes of Hope and Redemption within the story of P T Barnum, otherwise known as 'The Greatest Showman'.

The dates will be as below, starting at 7.30 pm:

Tuesday, 3rd March Tuesday, 10th March Wednesday, 18th March Tuesday, 24th March Tuesday, 31st March

This five week course offers discussion points, biblical reflections and prayers based on short excerpts from the film.

# The themes are:

- 'A Million Dreams', exploring what liberation and hope might look like for an 'outsider' in the world;
- 'Come Alive', exploring how the family of faith can bring hope and purpose;
- 'Rewrite the Stars' asks what forms of resistance can be placed in the way of salvation;
- 'Never Enough' questions the temptations of false fulfilment that can lead us to betrayal'
- 'The Greatest Show' shows how redemption is found when we discover that 'the circus is our home'.

The Lent book will be available to buy on the night.

Please come and join us... Venue to be arranged.

Ruth

# LENT 2020: Tree of Hope

The Elders have embraced the idea put forward by the Friends of Palani group that the church should put up a 'Tree of Hope' in the church foyer for the whole of the Lent period. People will be invited to affix cards of prayer, blessing and remembrance celebrating the gift of Easter. All freewill donations received will be in support of our mission partnership in Palani, where our involvement and help represents true hope and tangible improvements to their daily lives.

John Gibbons



# **LIONS CLUB OF FLEET (C10)**

# Tackling Winter Fuel Poverty in Fleet and the surrounding area

Can you help Fleet Lions support those who cannot afford heat this winter by donating all or part of your winter fuel allowance to Project Wenceslas?

citizens

Fleet Lions will be working with Citizens Advice Hart and Hart Voluntary Action to ensure that your donation is targeted to those in fuel poverty in the local area.

Last year about 25 people in desperate need were helped, with amounts ranging from £90—£400. Most were on benefits and out of work.

Payments are made directly to the energy provider, not to the individual families.

Donate at www.fleetlions.org.uk, or send a cheque made out to Lions Club of Fleet (C10) (endorsed on the back 'WFP') to: Lion Treasurer, 11 Glen Road, Fleet, Hants, GU51 3QS



# **SEASONAL SMILES**



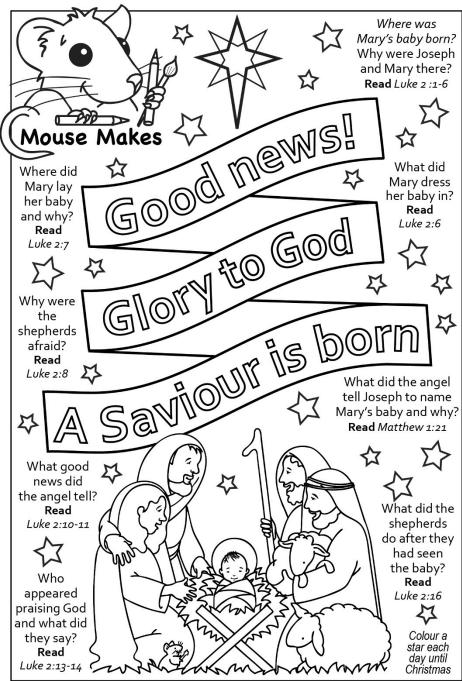
If athletes get athlete's foot, what do astronauts get? *Missile toe*.

Did you hear about the bakery that was burgled at Christmas? *Everything was stollen!* 

Why doesn't Father Christmas suffer from claustrophobia when he climbs down the chimney? Because he's had his flue jab.

Why is turkey so popular at Christmas? Because the weather is a lot warmer over there!

#### CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY



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# WEEKLY SERVICES DECEMBER 2019, JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2020

December		Advent and Christmas Services
1st	10 am	1st Sunday in Advent Parade & Gift Service led by Revd Ruth Dillon
	6.30 pm	Evening Worship & Holy Communion led by Revd Ruth Dillon
8th	10 am	2nd Sunday in Advent Family Worship led by Mr Sydney Shore
15th	10 am	3rd Sunday in Advent Family Worship & Holy Communion led by Revd Ruth Dillon
22nd	10 am	4th Sunday in Advent Family Worship led by Revd Stephen Thornton
	4 pm	Carols & Christingle Service led by Revd Ruth Dillon
25th	10 am	Christmas Day Christmas Day Worship led by Mr David Moll
29th	10 am	Family Worship led by Revd Clare Downing



January

5th 10 am Family Worship: Covenant Service led by Revd Ruth Dillon
No Evening Service

12th 10 am Family Worship led by Mrs Karen Smith

18th—25th Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

19th 10 am Family Worship & Holy Communion, led by Revd Ruth Dillon

26th 10 am Family Worship led by Revd Helen Everard



February

2nd 10 am
Family Worship led by Revd Ruth Dillon,
followed by Church Meeting
No Evening Service
9th 10 am
Family Worship led by Revd Stephen Thornton
Family Worship & Holy Communion led by Revd Ruth Dillon
23rd 10 am
Family Worship led by URC Moderator, Revd Nigel Uden

Items for the Spring issue of *In Touch* (March—May) should be with the editor, Christine Gibbons by **Sunday 16th February** (christine.gibbons@beech-ride.co.uk).