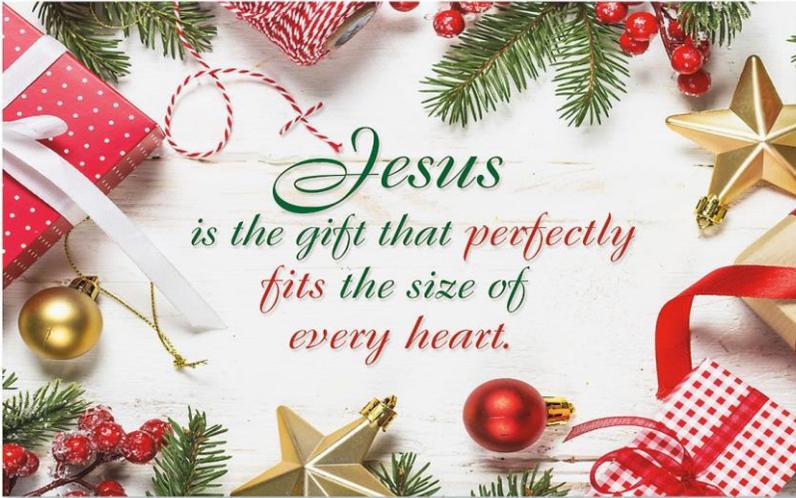




The
United
Reformed
Church

The **COURIER**

December '21/January '22



United Reformed Church
New Road, Brentwood

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BRENTWOOD UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
New Road, Brentwood, CM14 4GD

Church Office ☎ 01277 227556

Church Foyer ☎ 01277 217361

A Joint Pastorate with Ingatestone And Billericay

United Reformed Churches

www.brentwood-urc.org.uk

MINISTER Revd Barnabas Shin ☎ 07838790056

CHURCH Ms Sheila Maxey ☎ 01277 212357
SECRETARY

TREASURER Mr Kees Maxey ☎ 01277 212357

COVENANTS TBC

ORGANISTS Hymnal/virtual music

SERVING

ELDERS Mr Ian Davidson ☎ 01277 200095
 Mr Kees Maxey ☎ 01277 212357
 Mr Moses Tsingano ☎ 01277 410693
 Jenny Mayo ☎ 01277 218459

HALL

STEWARD Gabrielle Crowther

All bookings:

www.brentwood-urc.org.uk

Dear friends,

We are approaching Christmas again...

This time it will be different from last year 2020, when we had the sudden lockdown near to Christmas day. As I remember, there was certain hope that we could come back to normal, and we were able to do our carol service during the Advent period. However, we were restricted again, especially for the Christmas day, from which many missed the union with their family on that special national festival.



With this recent memory of our Christmas in 2020, I was asked to write about ‘What were your childhood Christmases like?’ for the URC magazine, *Reform*. This question brought me to journey back to my Christmases in the UK for the last 22 years and further back to my Christmases in Korea when I was a child.

My memory about Christmas in my childhood seemed all about the singing of carols as part of our church choir, and all the exciting activities on Christmas Eve. It was full of excitement and warmth surrounded by friends and family in Christ. One unforgettable memory was the Christmas Cantata from Handel’s Messiah that the joint choirs of our home church sang as a finale at the Christmas Eve service – there was around 200 people in the joint choirs, including both children and adults.

My home church in Korea had around 2,500 members at that time. On one Sunday, we had eight separate services – two children churches (infant and Junior), two youth churches (middle school and high school), and four main

Sunday services at different times (07:30am, 09:00am, 11:00am, and 13:30pm): we had a total of seven choirs in our church. It was a unique event that around 200 people in all church choirs gathered to sing together Handel's Messiah. I was so excited to be part of those voices at that young age of middle school and I was overwhelmed by such magnificent and wonderful harmonies we made to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

I enjoyed a lot for this time of remembering Christmases in my childhood. It even brings a sense of 'healing' in my heart from the disappointment and difficulty that I felt in 2020 with such memories of warmth and happiness.

- What memories do you have of your Christmases in your childhood?
- Do you have any significant symbol or carol in your memory of Christmas?
- With many lovely memories of Christmas in your childhood, is there anything that you miss most from Christmas in recent years?

Please share with me these memories in written form or in verbal conversation on any occasion. And you may also discuss it with your friends and family in your teatime or table fellowship.

And we might work out together to create a special Christmas for this year too individually and as a community, which might become another precious memory in our mind.

Obviously, Christmas is not about any other, but Jesus. It is not about church events, but the meaning of the birth of

Jesus to us and to our community. However, these events will remind us that we are not alone but with our family in Christ as we gather together. Our Advent services and carol services will encourage us to hear and sing the promise of the prophets and the Nativity stories. And with these events and gatherings, we will share our joy and even our difficulty together in mutual comfort and encouragement with the message of Emmanuel, God with us.

Let us put our effort in to making our Christmas this year special as we take our step of the journey with the wise men following the star in faith and in expectation. I pray that Christmas in 2021 will be remembered as a sacred time to bring healing and encouragement for us all.

Barnabas

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

On Saturday 6th November Rosalie and David's granddaughter, Anna Lily married Dan at a quiet family celebration. Congratulations!

Clive R is back in hospital – remember him in your prayers. Remember also our housebound or care home bound friends – Peggy G, Eileen B, Jean N and Margaret G.

January birthdays – on the 6th Markus V S will be 18 and on the 14th Lucy C will be 18.

Congratulations!



CHURCH SECRETARY REPORT

Service of thanksgiving and remembrance on 30th October. I think more than 70 people attended and it was a wonderfully joyful occasion, also with plenty of tears. Colin Gunton's daughter has written about it elsewhere in this Courier. Many thanks to those who worked hard to make it possible.

Christmas cards. There will be no rack to place cards for collection so please send/give cards within the church family yourself. If you want to send one card to all, then please pin it up on the board provided.

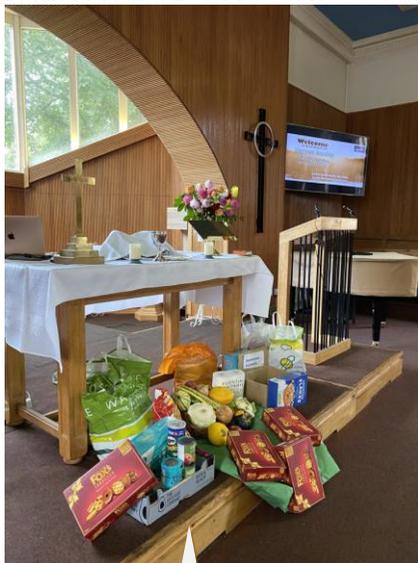
Church decoration for Christmas. Anyone is welcome to come on Friday 3rd December from 5pm onwards to decorate the church for Christmas – even if you are not able to do much physical work. We will order fish and chips at the end to eat together in the hall.

The Wednesday Lunch Club. We have good news from Sandra Nunn that she hopes to start the lunch club again in mid-January.

Sheila Maxey

HARVEST SUNDAY CELEBRATION IN PICTURES





Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance

This is a tale woven from many threads – so many threads! Even just for me there were the decades-old memories of childhood, those of my dear dad (Colin Gunton), whose life was so embedded in the church, the recent sadness of loss and the shadow of the pandemic that has hovered so low over the last year or so. And as we all gathered in the church on 30th October to remember and celebrate the lives of our loved ones, there were of course numerous other threads, gathered in from far and wide, from the long distant past and from the current members and friends of the church – and their families and friends. What a wonderful thing, to have brought those many experiences together in a joyous tapestry of lives well lived and shared.

I grew up as a member of Brentwood United Reformed Church in the 1970s and 1980s, and remember with gratitude and affection many of those whose lives were remembered during the service. To differing degrees, these people inspired and supported me as a child – and even through the turbulence and awkwardness of the teenage years! They provided a sense of connection and meaning which I am sure informed my recognition as an adult of my need to belong to a worshipping community. And most of all I remember the warmth and love of this church, which was so palpable as soon as I stepped back into the building, not having been there, other than for my dad's funeral in 2003, for years. Thank you to all of you who continue to make it a place full of love.

As a child, it was also the music – the singing, the orchestra, singing and drama with the youth club, the musical magic at Christmas Celebration, to name but a few – that tied me to the church. So it was wonderful to hear the organ again, to sing (not too lustily?), and even to be able to join in music-making with the Cheer family, like old times.

The service brought All Saints Day back to life for me: the saints we encounter are not dusty relics, but real human beings! Here we could take time to be grateful for what we have gained from them, to hear the moving testimonies of those whose experiences have been shaped by them, and who have observed the power of God's love in their lives and the impact of those lives on others. In their own spheres of influence, they all helped to make the world a better place. At a fundamental level, isn't that what we're here for? We were reminded of the wide variety of ways in which this happens, as different talents and qualities touch and enhance other lives. Wonderfully, as we remembered

those whose lives were over, the church was also full of young life, the sounds of the grandchildren and great grandchildren of our 'saints', growing up to take their part in the world.

A huge thank you to all those involved in planning and leading the service, getting the building ready and providing refreshments. It was a joyful and heart-warming affirmation of human life, and of the promise that 'for all these loved ones, sorrow and sickness are ended, death itself is past, and they live for ever in God's love and care.' Amen!

Carolyn Evans



NEWS FROM CHRISTIAN AID

Christian Aid Week 2021

We have received this message: It feels so good to share with you the amazing news that Christian Aid week donations have peaked at over 5 million pounds! We never fail to be surprised, delighted and grateful for the partnership of churches, volunteers and communities across the UK and Ireland. **Thank you.**

2021 Christmas Appeal

The climate crisis in South Sudan is polluting fragile water sources, killing crops and destroying homes. Combined with years of conflict and the Covid 19 pandemic, it's forcing mums to make impossible choices for their children. Dirty water or none at all? A morsel of food each, or a bigger portion for one? School fees, or materials to rebuild the family home?

Through your gifts you could help families in South Sudan and around the world stand strong with more boreholes, farming support and the chance to set up a small business.

Adut Mariu smiles as her baby boy happily gulps clean drinking water. Somethings so simple brings her so much joy. But for a long time, Adut was forced to give her children dirty water. She knew it wasn't safe but she had no choice.

"We were in desperate need", Adut explained. "To look after my children, they had to drink the dirty river water. The water has many diseases. There is cow dung, there is donkey dung. People also wash in there. The River Makadh runs through Adut's village of Biet in north west South Sudan and was the community's only source of water. It is dirty and unreliable; it dries up during long periods of drought and floods during heavy rainfall, rising to dangerous levels and spreading contaminated water. No mum should have to choose between dirty water or none at all. But for a long time, that impossible choice was a reality for Adut.

Adut now has access to a borehole near her home which means clean water for her children to drink whatever the weather – and peace of mind for a loving mum. Thanks to churches like yours, Adut's community were able to build the borehole with support from Christian Aid's local partner, SPEDP. They drilled a narrow shaft into the ground to extract water from a naturally occurring source. Above ground, a hand pump is used to drive the water to the surface. Waterborne diseases have fallen and Adut has more time for other activities like farming. She is also

the caretaker of the borehole and keeps it in good working order.

Envelopes will be available in church for your donations for the whole of the Advent and Christmas period or you can donate online at donate.christianaid.org.uk

Jenny Mayo

Moving stories Commitment for Life

Prayer Time

Heaven and earth are filled with your praises, O Creator God! You taught us to love to lilies, the birds, and our neighbour. Help us forgive all debt as You taught us in prayer; to lives beyond the reaches of unjust economic systems that devastate the earth. In Jesus' name. Amen.

A new report from Christian Aid has highlighted the deep inequalities dividing Palestinians and Israelis, threatening a further escalation of violence and loss of life.



Our good friend William Bell, Christian Aid's Head of Middle East Policy & Advocacy, has said, "Palestinians face an even more grim future... Without justice and equality there will be no Palestine and without Palestine neither Palestinian nor Israeli can enjoy the security, dignity and prosperity that all need to thrive and survive."

What passes for normality in Palestine is unsustainable in the face of the inequalities and injustices that characterize daily life

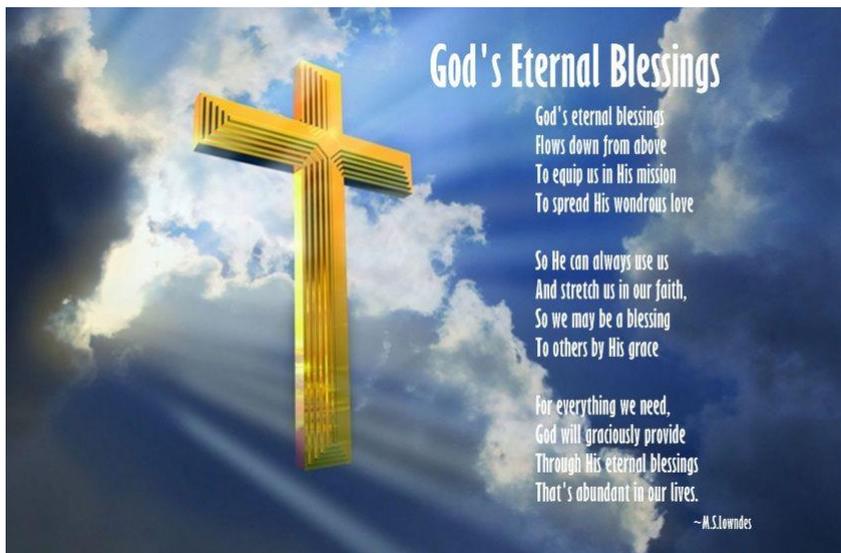
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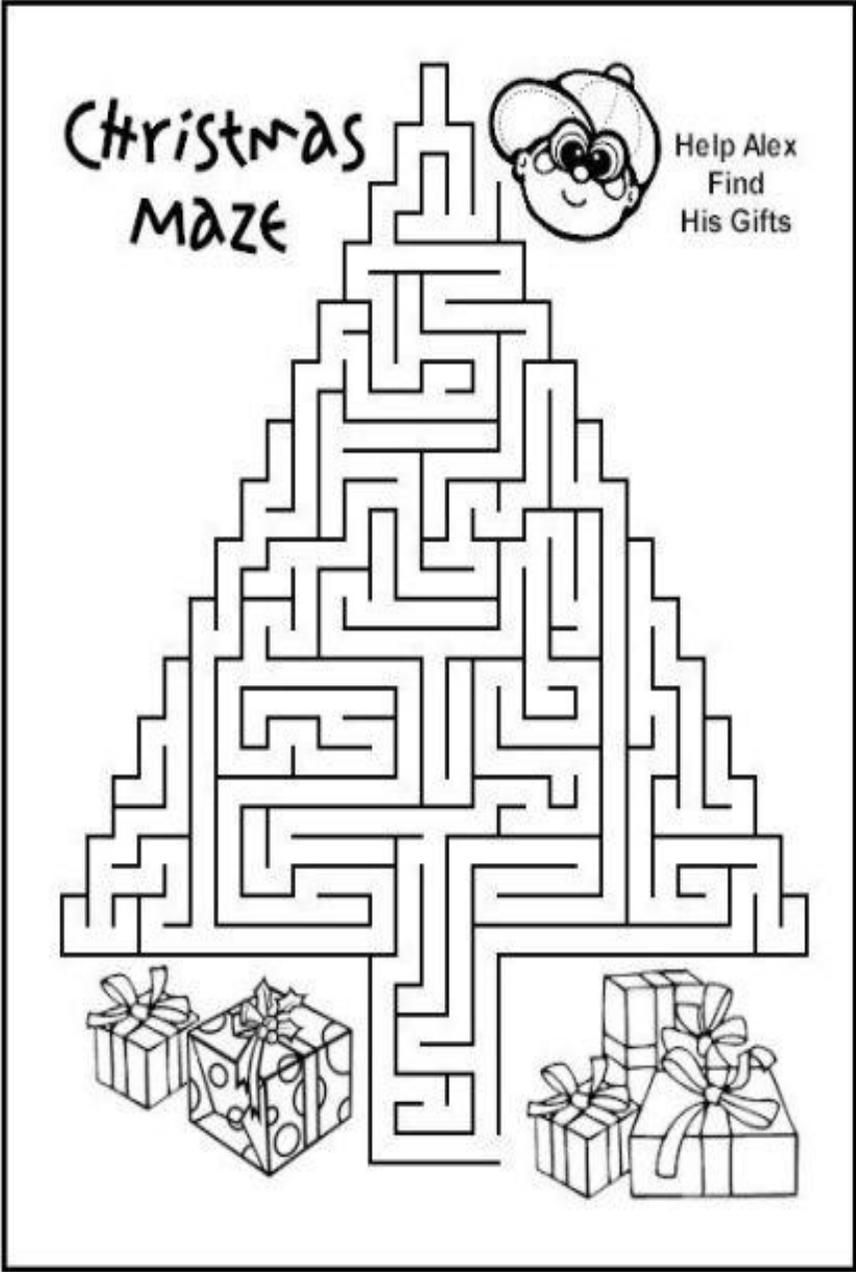
for millions of Palestinian people on the West Bank and Gaza. Christian Aid has urged a concerted action by the international community, including the UK government, to help address the underlying conditions that fuel the conflict, failing which here will be a continued cycle of violence and poverty.

The report shows how more than two decades since Palestinian and Israeli leaders signed the first Oslo Accord, there is no peace, with daily life for Palestinians worsening on many measures.

Commitment for Life works in partnership with Christian Aid to support local United Reformed congregations in their prayers, advocacy, and generosity to and for the most vulnerable communities in Palestine and Israel.

suzanne.pearson@urc.org.uk www.bit.ly/URCFL kevin.snyman@urc.org.uk





The Lord's Prayer

T A R D S Y D K H D
E E O E R I I X A K
V T M O H N M E L R
I E L P G T R S L E
L G J D T B A X O W
B Q O O Y A V F W O
R M Q L Q I T M E P
E V I G R O F I D Q
X A X W I L L K O G
D L J G F H B A J N

**FATHER
HALLOWED
KINGDOM
WILL**

**DAILY BREAD
FORGIVE
SINS
TEMPTATION**

**EVIL
GLORY
POWER**

Prayer calendar for December and January

December

The Church as it celebrates Advent and Christmas

Those who are persecuted for their faith

Brentwood Foodbank

Children in need through poverty or neglect

The United Nations – Human Rights Day 10th December

Our pastorate churches in Billericay and Ingatestone

CRISIS and its work at Christmas

People in need or under stress

Volunteers in the community



January

The life and mission of our church in 2022

Our minister Barnabas and his family

The work of Christian Aid and our Christmas appeal

Those who share our building with us

The unemployed and the overworked

The National Health Service in the middle of winter stress

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and Brentwood

Methodist Church who will be sharing our service with us – 23rd January

Refugees and Asylum seekers



Church Calendar

Throughout Advent and until Epiphany Christian Aid envelopes will be available for your gifts to the Christian Aid Christmas Appeal for clean water for Sudan.

December 2021

Wednesday 1st 9.30am Sacred Space, followed by Hand Bells

Friday 3rd from 5pm Church decorating for Christmas, followed by fish and chip supper.

Sunday 5th 10.30am Second Sunday of Advent – Gift Service led by Sheila, duty elder Ian

Gifts for the Food Bank

Wednesday 8th 9.30am Sacred Space

Sunday 12th 10.30am Third Sunday of Advent - Carol Service led by Barnabas. duty elder Jenny Special collection for CRISIS

Wednesday 15th 9.30am Sacred Space

7.45pm Elders meeting at 48 St Thomas Road

Sunday 19th 10.30am Fourth Sunday of Advent – Communion Service led by Sheila, duty elder Moses

Wednesday 22nd 9.30am Sacred Space

Sunday 26th 10.30am Boxing Day worship led by Barnabas

Wednesday 29th 9.30am Sacred Space

January 2022

Sunday 2nd 10.30am Morning worship for Epiphany led by Jenny, duty elder Ian

Wednesday 5th 9.30am Sacred Space

Sunday 9th 10.30am Morning worship led by Barnabas, duty elder Moses

Wednesday 12th 9.30am Sacred Space

Sunday 16th 10.30am Morning worship led by Beryl Hunt, duty elder Sheila/Jenny

Wednesday 19th 9.30am Sacred Space

Sunday 23rd 10.30am United Communion Service with the Methodists, led by Barnabas, duty elder Sheila.

Wednesday 26th 9.30am Sacred Space

Sunday 30th 10.30am Morning worship led by Sheila, duty elder Ian.

COMMUNION AIMS FUND



December 2021

The December collection goes to SNAP (Special Needs and Parents). This is a local charity that helps and supports children and young people with special needs and their parents.



January 2022

Brentwood Street Pastors, is part of a nationwide initiative active in

Brentwood. The first ever patrol of Street Pastors in Brentwood was on Friday 19th August 2011. A special commissioning service was held on the same day, at Sawyers Church, Sawyers Hall Layne, Brentwood.

Farewell to the Courier

This will be the last edition of the Courier. Corne, our excellent editor since Tony Cheer retired from the role, moved away with her family this Autumn. She very kindly agreed to produce this last edition.

We are now a small fellowship and are considering what is possible, and what is helpful for faithful church life. The elders have decided, from February 2022, to produce a monthly photo-copied newsletter – its exact form will probably evolve. It will be distributed within our Brentwood church family – taken in its widest sense. It will not be posted beyond Brentwood unless specifically requested.

I know many will be sad about this decision – but it is a matter of:

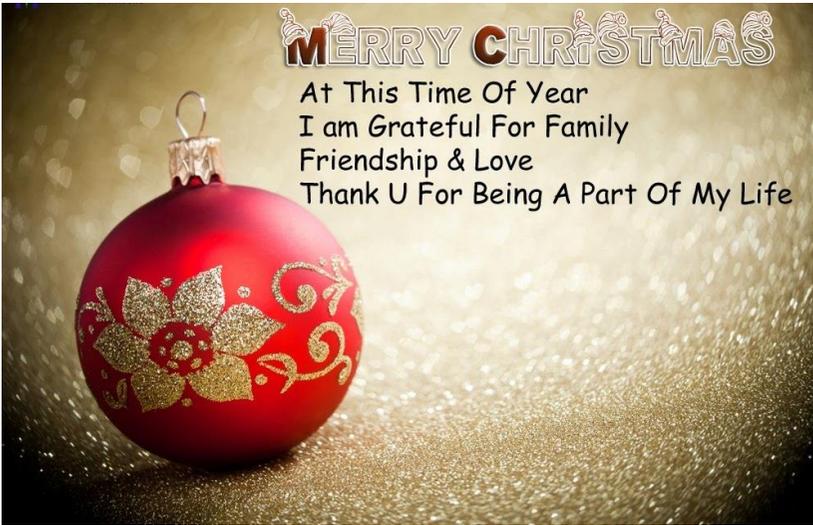
From the old things to the new, keep me travelling along with you. R&S 549

Sheila Maxey

FROM THE EDITOR

I look back over all the years of the courier and when I took it on in 2012. All the different items, people, messages and wonderful reflections on church family

times together. I want to thank everyone who always so diligently offered articles with the church secretary keeping an eye on calendars and ensuring the courier is out and about for all. We say goodbye to the past courier with remembrance of those who regularly offered articles for years and no longer with us. It is a great time to celebrate my decade of doing the courier and saying goodbye...from the old things to the new...sadness to say goodbye and excitement for what is coming.



BRENTWOOD UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

New Road, Brentwood, CM14 4GD

SUNDAY WORSHIP

10:30 am Family Worship with Creche and Junior Church

Holy Communion is usually celebrated at Morning Worship on the last Sunday of each month.

Details of preachers and special events are given in the below media site.

<http://ww.brentwood-urc.org.uk/>



Brentwood United Reformed Church

