



The
United
Reformed
Church

CHURCH NEWS

February 2020

Kingston United Reformed Church
www.kingstonurc.org



Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

[Alfred Lord Tennyson – see page 8]

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Church worship diary: February 2020

Sunday	02	10.00	Traditional worship with communion
		11.30	All-age worship
		18.30	Reflective worship
Tuesday	04	19.50	(Elders meeting)
Wednesday	05	10.00	Tots' praise
		13.10	Lunchtime service
Friday	07	13.00	Friday prayers
Sunday	09	09.30	Coffee available
		10.30	Combined worship
-- Copy deadline for March Church News: editor Jean Thompson --			
Wednesday	11	18.30	Reflective worship
		10.00	Tots' praise
		13.10	Lunchtime service
Friday	14	13.00	Friday prayers
Sunday	16	10.00	Traditional worship
		11.30	All-age worship
		18.30	Reflective worship with communion
Wednesday	19	10.00	Tots' praise
		13.10	Lunchtime service
Friday	21	13.00	Friday prayers
Sunday	23	10.00	Traditional worship
		11.30	All-age worship with communion
		15.30	Messy Church
		18.30	Reflective worship
Wednesday	26	10.00	Tots' praise
		13.10	Lunchtime service
Friday	28	13.00	Friday prayers

Church flowers for February

2 February	Wil Bryan
9 February	Ray Erskine
16 February	Flower Fund
23 February	Jean Thompson



Letter from Lesley

Dear All,



How do you cope with the bad bits of life? Do you believe they are all failure and useless? Do you think if we put in more effort, worked harder, prayed more - or if s/he did not do that, then it would not happen?

Wrong.

In every rose there is a thorn.

In every Christmas there is an incident.

In every birthday there is a dodgy or missing present.

Life is not perfect. It will never be. Of course that does not remove from us the responsibility to try to make it better. But perfect? Never.

What we need are internal resources to cope with the challenges. Christian people do not pretend that the bad things never happen. We also battle with the instinct to blame others because we know it might be our fault.

Is it possible that the things we thought of as totally negative could have some positive in them? We failed our exam and so had to get work. We found a job and it became our life's passion. We lost our job and so we rolled up our sleeves and got involved in the voluntary sector. We know the contribution we made has been transformational to many lives. Our partner left. Yes, it was hell. However, in time we built a good life that was very different from what it would have been if they had stayed.

It is certainly true that there are people who are very seriously ill who are more pleasant people than their physically fit counterparts are. There are people who are kind and gentle in their old age, which contrasts with their acerbic character in their middle years.

Maybe the challenge is to re-frame the way we look at a situation. To challenge ourselves about what is success and what is failure and wonder why we think as we do.

It is OK to shake an angry fist at God and express our sorrow at how things have gone. Yet the next phase is not to stay there howling at the moon, but to lift our eyes. To believe there might be something positive to see and something we are called to do.

Yours, **Lesley**

KURC

**NEW
2020
YEAR**

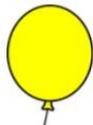
PARTY



3-5.30pm

Saturday 8 February

Mayo Hall



ALL-AGE



FUN



TEA



GAMES



QUIZ



& LOTS MORE



*but please bring
some food to share
if you can*

LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU!

Speak to Vaughan (020 8546 8506) if you would like to help

Pastoral news – January 2020

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

(1 Thessalonians 5 v 16-18)

Out of care for people’s privacy,
since January 2012 the list of
Personal Concerns
has been excluded from the web edition of
Church News.

Anyone wishing to receive the full edition of *Church News*
by e-mail should send an
e-mail to tony.wenman@gmail.com

Lord God,

At the start of another year we give you thanks and praise for the year just ended. We remember those who died last year, rejoicing in the good they contributed to the world but mindful of the gap they leave behind. We ask for your blessing and protection of those who were born last year; the future is full of challenges and we ask you to guide them. We ask your healing hands to be upon all those known to us who start the New Year recovering from or living with illness; be ever present to them in their struggle. We ask for your guiding hand on our church as we step, in faith, in to the new year seeking new ways to serve you in this place.

We pray all those involved in leading worship; we are blessed with many ordained and lay people able to lead worship and we ask for your continued inspiration of them; we give thanks for all those who support worship through playing the organ or piano, reading the bible or singing in the choir, together, may the worship here bring glory to your name. We give thanks for those who lead small groups within the life of the church; neighbourhood groups, interest groups or just groups of friends, bless their work in bringing us together and strengthening the bonds of love among us. We pray for the youth ministry support group; encourage them as they oversee our work with young people; give them wisdom and discerning minds as they direct the work.

Finally, we pray for our ministers, Lesley and Suk-In. As another New Year begins and another round of the Christian story starts, reveal yet more of your truth to them as they lead us, that the good news may be alive in new ways to us all this year.

Amen

Martyn Verge

An elder's reflection

An elder leads the start of each elders' meeting with thoughts, reflections and prayer. We are currently focusing on the book Why did Jesus, Moses, The Buddha and Mohammed Cross the Road? by Brian McLaren. Linda Austin led the start of the January elders' meeting and this is her reflection:

In chapter 17 of the book, Brian McLaren tells a story. He describes a series of inter-faith gatherings. The timing is important – a few weeks after 9/11. The gatherings were hosted in a local mosque and included Christians, Jews, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and others who could experience warm Muslim hospitality in the midst of all the inter-religious fear and hostility of the moment – perhaps not dissimilar to today.

At the first gathering, they observed the Muslim tradition of removing their shoes and of seating the men in one room and women in another, connected by CCTV. But for subsequent meetings the Muslim hosts suspended their traditions so that everyone would feel more at home. At these gatherings the participants in turn were asked in 5 to 10 minutes to address the question: *What according to my tradition, is my duty to my neighbour of another religion?* A good question.

Brian McLaren goes on to describe over several pages the responses to this question. Those who insulted their hosts in the first sentence; the brilliantly scholarly paper which took twice the time requested to deliver with little physical connection to the audience; a paper filled with quotes delivered in an emotionally low monotone. Some statements caused Brian to want to be swallowed up by the floor (we all know that feeling) but it was the Pentecostal pastor who had the biggest impact. You might guess what's coming or you might not...

The Pastor started getting emotional; used evangelical lingo with a heavy southern accent; he started shouting saying in effect, *I love you! I love you all! And because I love you it is my duty to you all to tell you that you are all going straight to hell unless you repent and receive Jesus Christ as your personal Lord, Saviour, Healer and Deliverer!* Then he went on to quote Bible passages – you can imagine the scene. After about 30 minutes he stopped. What happened next was extraordinary. There was extended applause from the audience. What happened?

Brian McLaren surmises that through this pastor, (and no doubt in spite of him to some degree) the Holy Spirit conveyed love in an extraordinary and needed way. Predictably perhaps, his words said *I'm in; you're out. To be in you must join my religion and believe what I believe.* But his actions and his manner spoke more truly: *I love you. I care about you. I'm here with you. I'm pouring out my heart to you – in spite of our differences. I'm holding nothing back. I'm taking a risk. I'm being real. I love you.*

The point that Brian McLaren makes is that when humanity and vitality are focused outward in sincerity and love for others, the condemning content is overshadowed by the spirit, the Holy, vital, loving Spirit.

Let us all love each other, wholeheartedly.

Prayers for our world

In response to welcome initiative from Martyn Verge, Church News is introducing a new section where we pray for countries or global issues. If you would like to contribute a prayer or have a country or issue you would like us to pray for please contact Martyn. This month we are praying for Australia and the bushfires affecting much of the east coast and for the tensions between Iran and the US.

Lord of creation, we pray for all those affected by the bushfires in Australia, particularly those who have lost a member of their family or their home. Surround them with your love. Protect all those trying to contain the fires; send rain and cooler air on the region. We pray for the wildlife of the area, the many animals that have been killed, injured or have lost their habitat. Help all those seeking to rebuild and working to prevent such a disaster in future.

Lord of peace, we pray for the leaders of the US and Iran and the tension between the two countries. We fear an escalation in the violence in the region and ask for your help. Guide all those involved that they may find a resolution to their differences without the need for further loss of life; bring peace and stability to the region.

Amen

Gardening at Kingston Academy



Our daughter, Rachel, who has recently embarked on a second career as a Science teacher at Kingston Community Academy, has started a gardening club. This is proving a wow! with the students who are brightening the school grounds with flowers, fruit and vegetables. They have even planted up an indoor pot for each of the teachers' desks. Rachel has asked if any KURC members have surplus gardening tools they could pass on? They need small forks and trowels, large spades (but not forks), rakes, watering cans and flower pots. Please contact Ken or Liz Bartlett if you can help.

Liz Bartlett

Ring out, wild bells

I came across this 1850 poem by Tennyson in early autumn last year when, in a musical setting by Percy Fletcher (1879-1932), it appeared in the list of items selected for the Kingston U3A Singers to perform at our Christmas concert. As rehearsals progressed over the autumn months, the words became more and more entrenched in my mind and in parallel seemed to me to become ever more relevant to our own times. I hope you find the poem as moving as I do.



Vaughan James

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light;
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more,
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease,
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

Reproduced from the Public Domain listing: <https://www.public-domain-poetry.com/alfred-lord-tennyson/ring-out-wild-bells>

Keeping up-to-date with what's new at KURC

After a temporary absence from KURC's website (www.kingstonurc.org), the church calendar has now been restored and brought up to date. You can visit it by clicking on 'Events and News' in the left-hand column on the website's home page and then opting for 'KURC monthly calendar' from the list of further options presented. There are various ways of viewing the calendar, as listed in its top right-hand corner: by week, by month or as a simple listing ('agenda'). We hope you will make use of the calendar and find it helpful.

The calendar is valid for this month, but the schedule of events beyond this should be regarded only as provisional.
Find Calendar Help and Site Navigation Panel [here](#).

Calendar [\(Return to Events and News\)](#)

Kingston United Reformed Church

Today ← → Saturday, 25 January Print Week Month Agenda

> 04:00	Street Pastors
10:00	Stay and Play
22:00	Street Pastors
Sunday, 26 January	
> 04:00	Street Pastors
Publication date Church News	
10:00	Traditional worship
11:30	All-age worship with communion
11:30	All-age worship with communion
15:30	Messy Church
18:30	Reflective worship
Monday, 27 January	
10:00	Jolly Toddlers
Wednesday, 29 January	
10:00	Tots Praise
13:10	Lunchtime service
Thursday, 30 January	

The listing can only remain useful however if it is kept up-to-date. You can help us achieve this by letting us know if, for example, you are organising a new KURC event, making changes to an existing event or are even simply aware of an event that hasn't yet reached the website. Please let Vaughan James (vaughanrijames@gmail.com) have details.

Thank you.

To make a financial donation to Kingston URC, please see inside back cover

Lesley's KURC birthday party, Saturday 23 November 2019

Thank you from Lesley....

I would like to give big thanks to all those who have celebrated with me my 60 years:

- Thanks for the cards, gifts and best wishes
- Thanks for the party and thanks to those who came
- Thanks to Rose for doing the food, the Elders for the song and Finlay and Georgina for the dancing

Great!

.....photos.....



.....and the celebratory song, performed by the elders and others, to the tune of ‘*While shepherds watched*’:

Let’s cast our minds back (those who can) to nineteen fifty-nine, and home in on November and the events its days enshrine.

The M1 saw the light of day (well, the opening mile or two); while *The Sound of Music* and *Ben Hur* were sensationally new!

In short a month that history would have given a mere footnote - if the hand of fate had not reached out and grabbed it by the throat....

...which happened on the NINTH of course when Lesley here was born in Cullercoats, which bore the shock-waves of this brave new dawn...

..just down the road, we’re sure you’ve guessed from Newcastle-upon-Tyne, where at school we can’t imagine she did anything but shine.

Then to Manchester for her BA. Still true to northern climes, she shunned the wayward, pampered south until called by the chimes

of Mansfield College, set amidst those Oxford dreaming spires; but not to day-dream but to fuel her faith’s enduring fires.

Released from academia to real life’s hurly-burley, she preached successfully with a view to minister in Purley.

Next, one more step along the road she went - to Wallington; then after only thirteen years the time came to move on.

Here, Kingston URC stretched out its grateful, welcoming hands, and suddenly she found herself ensconced in Berrylands.....

....accompanied by the family: she collected on the way: two lovely daughters Hannah and Alice and the tower of strength that’s Ray.

At work she brandished her new broom, a step-by-step pacesetter, preaching that not ALL change is bad In fact, it’s often better!

Her home-life too has changed a lot since her arrival day: her daughters married, two grandkids and a third one on the way.

To fill her many leisure hours she likes a gentle stroll – to Scotland, say, or Whitley Bayand next year the North Pole?

But not all changes: Newcastle’s still high in her affection; Kalymnos, step-aerobics too and her ABBA CD collection.

Your presence, Lesley, here with us brings us countless dividends; so A VERY HAPPY 60TH BIRTHDAY from your grateful Kingston friends



Elders elections 2020



If you are a church member, by the time you read this towards the end of January you should have collected or received your voting papers for elections to KURC's eldership for the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. Completed papers are due back by Sunday 23 February. Please either post them in the box at the rear of the church or, failing that, return them in by mail.

Four serving elders (Sharon Henriquez-Vernon, Glyn Robinson, Cathy Seymour and Tony Wenman) will be standing down in March after their six years in office and are not eligible for re-election this year. We are also losing Sulhee Kim who has now returned to South Korea. We are indebted to all of them for the time, commitment and energy that they have put into their work as elders during their respective periods in office. We also have three elders who have completed three years: Liz Bartlett, Janine Goddard and Denise Scorer. Liz and Janine are willing to serve for a further three-year term and, as was agreed at January's Church Meeting, they have been asked and have agreed to continue for a second term. Our thanks go to Denise for her invaluable contributions to KURC's work during her most recent period of eldership.

All of this means that we now have vacancies for a total of six new elders to join the nine existing elders who will remain in office. These are Maddie Anlezark, Maggie Arnold, Linda Austin, Ken Bartlett, Liz Bartlett, Janine Goddard, Vaughan James, Sue Shaw and Martyn Verge. We feel it is important to maintain eldership numbers at 15 in order to cover responsibilities and duties adequately. Even more vital, though, is the need to make the elders meeting more representative of KURC's membership as a whole. Groups under-represented include 11.30 and lunchtime service attenders, black and Korean members, younger members, young parents. Do please bear these groups in mind when completing your voting papers.

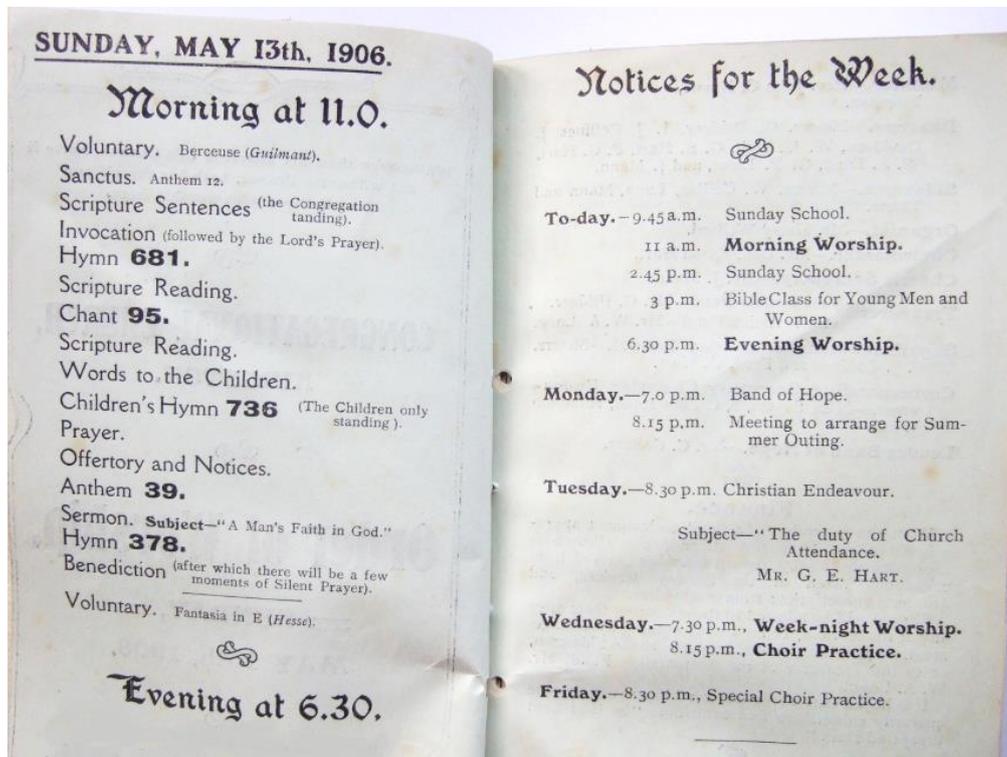
The most essential qualification for eldership is a commitment to Christian values and service backed by the willingness to play an active role in shaping KURC's future. Elders' responsibilities involve attending elders meetings once a month, performing Sunday service duties and where appropriate taking on a specific area of responsibility in the church's life. Becoming an elder offers church members not only a proactive role in shaping KURC's present and future but also opportunities for personal and spiritual development. New elders are offered training, support and mentoring. You can find out more about eldership in the

URC leaflet 'Called to be an elder; is this for you?', available as an easily readable pdf at www.urcsouthwest.org.uk/media/called_to_be_an_elder.pdf.

Should the election process fail to produce enough willing people to help generate a balanced eldership, representative of the congregation as a whole, the eldership will co-opt people they see as suitable to join the elders' meeting for a prescribed period, with due regard for the diversity in our church.

Please do think and pray about the shape of the new eldership as you complete your voting forms. Thank you.

Archive of the month



Here's part of our very first printed 'service paper', dating from May 13th 1906. Up to 1980 every service paper was archived, but the collection began to occupy too much space, and so we now retain just a small representative sample from each year.

John Fisher

Supporting Christian Aid at Christmas

Thanks to raised voices on a chilly night in the town and widespread KURC support for an ecologically sound approach to church Christmas card exchange, KURC was able to send £1,400 to Christian Aid at Christmas - £200 from carol singing in Eden Street on the evening of 19 December and £1,200 from entries in the 2019 Alternative Christmas Card.



A big thank you to all those who sang, played instruments, sparkled under the streetlights, provided greetings, pasted, photocopied, distributed. And, of course, organised.

Reviews from KURC's book club

***Matchstick Man* by Julia Kelly**

This is a well-written story of a person's mind disintegration and its effects on the partner and family of the man they are losing to confusion, distress and amnesia – something about which is very familiar to many.

Julia Kelly met a charismatic and successful artist, Charlie Whisker, while she was working on her first novel. He was twenty years older than she. Their relationship was passionate and extraordinary; each of them inspired the other. Their friends were writers, artists and rock stars; they lived a glamorous life of exhibitions, parties and concerts. They became parents to a daughter they adored. Charlie suddenly changed, becoming hopelessly forgetful, angry and confused.

This is an honest, unsentimental and sad description of a brilliant man's mental disintegration and its effects on his family. Charlie's disturbing behaviour is described in a series of revelations.

It's the telling of a story that will be familiar to many thousands of people who grapple with the effects of mental degeneration. A sad book about the loss of a mind and the conflicting layers of a relationship yet

somehow, at the same time, it is uplifting and life-affirming and at times even funny. The book traces the reality of Alzheimer's disease with little self-sympathy. The book doesn't shy away from the devastating effect the disease has on the couple's relationship and on their young daughter. Julia Kelly doesn't hide any of the pain or destruction that the breakdown of her once beloved Charlie has on her life.

The group found the book both moving and one of relevance to highlight the challenges of coping with mental disease.

***The Grass is Singing* by Doris Lessing**

Set in South Africa under white rule, Doris Lessing's first novel is both a chronicle of human disintegration and a sort of social critique.

The book gives a realistic sense of slavery in South Africa during the Apartheid period. There is a lot of tension and division between the blacks and whites. A white protagonist called Mary Turner is the main character of the book. She struggles through her life and cares too much about what the society feels she should do rather than taking control of her own life. It seems that Mary would have been very happy as a spinster and would have lived her life on her own terms. Because of some gossip she hears from her friends, she decides to marry someone she does not love (Dick). She likes being the dominant wife in the marriage and she helps Dick manage the farm and, in the process, is very rude to the “natives” or blacks. Mary Turner is a self-confident, independent young woman who becomes the depressed, frustrated wife of an ineffectual, unsuccessful farmer. Little by little the tedium of years on the farm work their slow poison, and Mary's despair progresses until the arrival of an interesting black servant, Moses. Locked in anguish, Mary and Moses - master and slave - are trapped in a situation of mounting attraction and repulsion. Their psychic tension explodes in an intense scene that ends this disturbing tale of racial strife in colonial South Africa.

Quite a challenging book which brings prejudice and exploitation into sharp focus. We are mindful that there are many similar regimes still in existence in our world today.

Do speak to Katie Frost or Linda Austin if you would like to join the group. You would be most welcome. We meet at Katie's home as from 1930 on the third Tuesday of each month.

KURC Book Club



Walking the Thames Path

As we look forward to brighter and warmer weather, now is the time to think about getting out into the fresh air. A good walk is along the Thames path from Putney to Barnes. It is an easy three-and-a-half flat miles.

Kingston to Putney by 85 bus takes about 35 minutes. Keeping to the left-hand side, cross the bridge and then go down the steps to the river and Bishops Park. Continue on, with the rowing club



Some of Peter's walkers in Bishops Park 2015

boathouses on your left and the gardens of Fulham Palace, former residence of the Bishops of London, on the right. Turn right



Fulham Palace

where the gardens finish and go on up to the entrance to the Palace. The house and gardens are well worth a visit; they are open daily and are free. There is a café in the palace, or the park café is just across from the gates for coffee or lunch, depending on the time of day.

Go on through the park and exit onto the road to go around Craven Cottage, the home of Fulham Football Club. Then left back to the river and on until Hammersmith Bridge. The bridge is closed to traffic, so take the right-hand walkway over the Thames and down towards the river. On this bank the walk is not built-up. There are trees and bushes and views over to Chiswick, until Barnes is seen on the left. In front is Barnes Bridge with the station for a train to Clapham Junction and on to Kingston. If you prefer a bus, cross the road and turn left at the High Street. Continue through Barnes until you reach to the village pond, beside which is the bus stop for the 485 to Putney Bridge and then the 85 back to Kingston.

Peter Ashdown

**‘Never in my life have I learned anything
from a person who agreed with me’**

Dudley Field Malone, American lawyer (courtesy of Natasha Reid)

Mayor's charity fundraising project

I would like to invite you to be part of a great fundraising project – for the Mayor's Charitable Trust. Each year in May, when a new Mayor is elected, he or she chooses the voluntary Organisations that appeal to them. When our Mayor, Councillor Margaret Thompson, took on the role last May, she chose Oxygen and the Kingston Centre for Independent Living (KCIL). Naturally, as Patron of KCIL. I was delighted with both her choices, and although I cannot speak for Oxygen, I'm sure they are too.

So how can you support, to achieve the Mayor's desire to help both Organisations?

Do you have an old mobile phone/s you don't use anymore?

If so, you can be part of a big, green charity recycling drive from Kingston Council, in collaboration with the Mayor's Charitable Trust, which is officially launching in February.

The Council is teaming up with local e-waste recycling company GSUK for the **Mobile Mop-up** project. During a two-week period starting in **February**, they are inviting people to hand over old, now unused mobile phone handsets to be recycled.



Phones will be sent to the GSUK recycling plant to be **data-wiped**, meaning all your information will be disposed of safely and securely. The team will then breathe new life into your old handset so it can be used again, or it will be stripped for parts if beyond repair. You don't have to drop off a phone charger - just a handset is fine. Any unused phones - there are no limits on the age or model.

Kingston council are creating freepost envelopes, which people can take home and post their old phones - they will do the rest!

I will be requesting a collection box, where phones can be dropped, temporarily, in the Church Office, and I will take responsibility to ensure they find their way safely to the Mayor's Parlour.

If you find you do not have an old mobile, please ask your family and friends and any other organisation with whom you come into contact, and I will do the rest.

Thank you. Wishing you a happy and healthy 2020.

Ann Macfarlane

Recommended reads for 2020

New decade: new bedtime book! Here are some suggestions from ministers, elders and CN's very own editors.

The Buried Giant by Kazuhiro Ishiguro. I think it is beautifully written; a lovely book – worth a second read.

Cathy Seymour

During 2019 I read all the so called Cormorant Strike novels by Robert Galbraith. They are called ***The Cuckoo's Calling, The Silkworm, Career of Evil*** and ***Lethal White***. They are all cracking yarns about a private detective, really lovely thick books which are unputdownable! They have also been televised but the books are a good read. For anyone not into Harry Potter, Robert Galbraith is of course J K Rowling.

Denise Scorer

Mick Herron writes thrillers about 'Slough House' which is where failed MI5 officers are sent to avoid public scandal. There they are supervised by the appalling Jackson Lamb: inevitably this leads to further trouble. Beautifully written and highly entertaining. Try ***Slow Horses*** or ***Dead Lions***.

Ken Bartlett

For me the past chunk of time has been reading and rereading the work of a researcher called Brene Brown. She has written 5 books which ended up on the New York Times best sellers list. She is an academic and studies shame and vulnerability. The results of her studies are to point towards what a wholehearted life looks like. This is not the world of self-help but data.

Some of her books are ***Daring greatly, The gifts of imperfection, Braving the wilderness, Rising strong*** and ***Dare to Lead***.

If you are not a person who reads, she has done 2 Ted talks. One is in the top 5 most viewed talks. She also has a talk on Netflix .

Lesley Charlton

Please see KURC Book Club reviews on pages 14 and 15 for recommendations from.....

Linda Austin

I've just finished my fourth Helen Dunmore novel and am delighted to find there are eight more still to read, as well as lots of poetry. I started with her first, ***Zennor in Darkness*** which, like all her novels, is historical fiction. It's about D H Lawrence and his German wife Freda, set in Cornwall during World War 2, where the locals think they are German spies. I next read ***Birdcage***

Walk which, sadly, turned out to be Dunmore's last. I was attracted to it because it's set in a spectacular part of Bristol - a magnificent terrace high above the Avon Gorge which I happened to have visited the previous year. Helen Dunmore has a wonderful feel for place and also for the period she writes about - in this book the mid nineteenth century building boom and its subsequent collapse.

Her novels tend to reveal what she describes as her 'fascination with the long shadows of war'. **The Lie**, again set in Cornwall, has as its protagonist a young man whose companion and best friend was killed in the trenches of the First World War. It becomes abundantly clear in this book as in many of her others, how a historical event can wreck the lives of those who survive as well as those who do not. Dunmore's plots grab your interest as do her characters. In **Exposure**, the main character is Lily, wife of Simon who is falsely accused of spying in the Cold War era. We learn about Lily's background as a refugee to England before the Second World War and understand how her childhood in Nazi Germany gave her the toughness to withstand threats to her and her children's safety in Simon's absence.

Helen Dunmore is a courageous writer whose writing is full of emotional integrity. Highly recommended!

Liz Bartlett

Looking back through my 'Books read' journal, I read several good books last year. Here are a couple:

(1) Philip Yancey: **Where is God when it hurts?** – pain is essential in protecting us but can also be a source of great distress. Philip's book covers both aspects suggesting practical ways to deal with pain and how we can help those in pain.

(2) Peter Robinson: **Careless Love** – my first venture in to the world of DC Banks. It is a crime story but I enjoyed the descriptions of the countryside where the action is set and the very realistic characters.

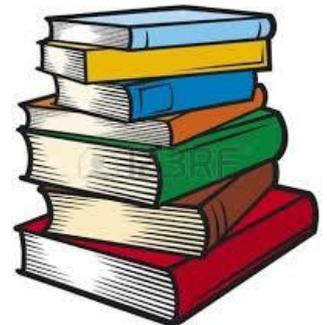
Martyn Verge

When I travel, I always seek out 2 books in each country to try and understand the culture: (1) a folklore book as they're traditionally seen as oral history; and (2) the no.1 best seller, to understand the modern popular culture. The books I want to share are:

(1) **Mongolian folk tales**: it's full of their nomadic lifestyle, relationship with animals.

(2) **Horses of Gods** by Mahi Binebine. Winner of the charity I support, English PEN, a human rights charity that campaigns for the freedom to write and read. This book is based in Casablanca.

Sharon Henriquez-Vernon



I'm an avid readers so it is hard to identify just one title.

One that springs to mind is a novel ***Poisonwood Bible*** by Barbara Kingsolver. Set in Africa, it details the life of an American 'missionary' family. Told from several different points of view. A thoughtful and gripping read.

Sue Shaw

I would like to recommend two books, and ask members, having read both, how they relate to one another.

The first book is John Shelby Spong's ***Unbelievable***. American Bishop John Shelby (Jack) Spong looks very hard at the traditional beliefs of the church and asks searching questions, claiming that your beliefs are not set in stone, but in your brain, based on your experience of life and religion. Beliefs need to change with time and experience and questioning.

The other book is ***Children's letters to God - The New Collection***, collected by Stuart Hample and Eric Marshall, which I received for Christmas. At one level it prompts gentle amusement, but at another it should prompt lots of serious thought: what do children really mean when they talk about God, and how believable is what we teach them, directly or by example?

Tony Wenman

Anything by Kate Atkinson. The first of her books I read was ***Life after Life***, and I became an immediate fan. It's a huge and engrossing saga which plays around with time while charting the conflicting paths the life (and death) of the book's leading character could have taken. Its sequel, ***A God in Ruins***, is equally good, and I have just finished her most recent novel, ***Big Sky***, the latest in her Jackson Brodie series. But you don't need to have read the earlier books in the series to enjoy this one...and I am sure you would.



Vaughan James

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How are we here? Why are we here?

Each of us is the unique miracle that our parents achieved umpteen years ago. Mum produced an egg (ovum) and Dad produced as many as 20 to 100 million spermatozoa, and together they arranged for them to meet. They did not arrange the pairing. That is why they did not know precisely what would be the result of their actions; they did not even know for certain that there would be a human result of their actions, except, we hope, a great degree of pleasure for them in the attempt. It was quite by chance - a one in several millions chance - that sperm A met the egg and they combined to produce you. Had sperm B, C,

D or any one of the other several million sperms had got to the egg first, the outcome would have been different. Therefore you are unique.

Having got to the point of becoming a unique human being (ie being born), all you had to do was use the facilities given to you to understand the world and people about you and the life they lead. That understanding was different for each individual, since each of us experiences the world individually according to our peculiar sensory characteristics - our hearing, our sight, our sense of smell and taste and our sensitivity to touch.

But the Bible suggests that we are all made in the image of the one God, whatever image that might be for you. But how can one God be such a varied being as to encompass the vast range of characteristics of humanity? That is an idea that is totally beyond my comprehension. To be so simplistic as to suggest that God made us may have been perfectly excusable in the age when the Bible text was first developed orally and then written down, sometime between 6 and 10 thousand years before Christ. Hence we have the book of Genesis which gives a totally incredible view of creation. Our scientific understanding of the world now is far, far removed from that understood by Moses, the editor of the book of Genesis, or the several authors who probably contributed to the book. The picture created of the wise male figure with the long beard, wearing a white robe (I usually say nightie!) and making the universe “and all that therein is” (including humanity) can no longer be held to be true - and even our young children will tell you that! How we got to be humanity on earth is a complete mystery which science currently struggles, and fails, to solve completely. Clearly the process of creation has been going on for a vast duration of time, far longer than it took to produce the book of Genesis. Archaeologists have recently reported the discovery of wall paintings in Indonesia that are 44,000 years old. Those who claim that the Bible is “true” are clearly undermined by that notion, and one must constantly ask, and so must they, what do they mean by the “truth” of the Bible. Genesis comes from written sources that could date from 10,000 years before Christ. The pictures recently found on a cave wall in Indonesia suggest that humans were around on earth some 30,000 years earlier. Was God creating at least that much earlier than Genesis seems to imply? Think of people of our generation in court with their hand on a copy of the Bible promising to tell, “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth” and then having the gall to ask God to help them do it. The ‘evidence’ from the dock following such statements, during many cases over time, has ranged from the facts of the case to pure fiction. What is truth? That might also have been a good question to ask of politicians on the recent hustings!

Where does that leave God? It leaves God where and what you believe God to be. Some believe “God is in his heaven, and all’s right with the world” and others, like me, can only see God as the mysterious energy that started processes the like of which you and I are the result so far.

Tony Wenman

The Church handbook

Good news! The January 2020 edition of the KURC Handbook is now available. It's available in hard copy only as we are restricted by the General Data Protection Regulation. If you would like a copy, please see Linda Austin or Liz Cook. It's the first version we have created since the 'permission' requirements have been introduced under GDPR and we are grateful for everyone's understanding of the need to complete and sign a form.

The format is landscape A4 as that seemed to be the most efficient in terms of saving paper and providing individual's addresses etc. all on one line. There is no reason why this should not change in the future but it's what we have now.

If your name is not included and you would like it to be, please speak to Linda Austin or Liz Cook.

We have tried hard to ensure there are no mistakes or typos but, inevitably, some will have slipped through. Please let us know about these and we will ensure that subsequent editions are corrected.

Linda Austin & Liz Cook



readings for February 2020

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Praying and fasting

Saturday 1 February Matthew 7:1-6

DEALING WITH DISAPPOINTMENT

Sunday 2 February Joshua 1:1-11

Monday 3 February 1 Samuel 1:1-20

Tuesday 4 February Nehemiah 1:1-11

Wednesday 5 February Isaiah 40:27-31

Thursday 6 February John 20:24-29

Friday 7 February Luke 18:18-27

Saturday 8 February John 16:16-24

SONG OF SOLOMON

Sunday 9 February Song of Solomon 1

Monday 10 February Song of Solomon 2

Tuesday 11 February Song of Solomon 3

Wednesday 12 February Song of Solomon 4

Thursday 13 February Song of Solomon 5

Friday 14 February Song of Solomon 6:1-7; 7

Saturday 15 February Song of Solomon 8

1 & 2 PETER

1 Strangers in the world

Sunday 16 February 1 Peter 1:1-16

Monday 17 February 1 Peter 1:22-2:10

Tuesday 18 February 1 Peter 2:13-3:7

Wednesday 19 February 1 Peter 3:8-22

Thursday 20 February 1 Peter 4:1-11

Friday 21 February 1 Peter 4:12-19

Saturday 22 February 1 Peter 5:1-13

2 God's provision

Sunday 23 February 2 Peter 1

Monday 24 February 2 Peter 2

Tuesday 25 February 2 Peter 3

THE RESPONSIBILITIES WE SHARE

1 Fresh start

Wednesday 26 February

(Ash Wednesday) Matthew 4:1-11

Thursday 27 February Psalm 51:1-12

Friday 28 February Hosea 6:1-6

Saturday 29 February Deuteronomy 30:15-20



Regular activities

Sunday:

15.30 Messy Church (monthly, but Sundays vary
– for dates see Worship Diary on page 3)

Monday:

10.00 Jolly Toddlers (during school terms)

Tuesday:

19.30 Book Club: (third Tuesday monthly)
Speak to Linda Austin or Katie Frost for location

Wednesday:

10.00 Tots' Praise (during school terms)
13.10 Lunchtime service
14.00 & 19.30 Faith studies – check dates and frequency of short courses

Thursday:

19.00 International Friendship Café
19.30 Line Dancing

Friday:

13.00 Friday prayers
14.00 Ballroom and Latin American dancing with Lyn
22.00 Street Pastors and all-night prayers (until 04.00)

Saturday:

10.00 Stay & Play (third Saturday monthly)
22.00 Street Pastors and all-night prayers (until 04.00)

How to contribute to *Church News*:

Contributions on matters of reflection and opinion as well as reports of activities are welcome. Copy for **Church News** must reach the editor, *preferably by email*, no later than midday on the **second Sunday of the month**.

The next copy deadline is 12 noon on Sunday 9 February; editor: Jean Thompson

FINANCIAL DONATIONS may be made to the church in a number of ways, including via our *Virgin moneygiving* page, accessible via our website at www.kingstonurc.org. You can also pay directly into our bank account: sort code 20-46-76, account number 33 05 49 42. If you would like more information on giving to KURC, please ask any elder.

Kingston United Reformed Church is a member of the **Local Ecumenical Project** in Kingston Town Centre with its partner, **All Saints Parish Church** in the Market Place.

The town centre ministers meet regularly.

*We are a part of **Churches Together in Kingston**.*

*Kingston URC is also affiliated with the **Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK)***

*And the **Presbyterian Church of the Republic of Korea (PROK)***

Thank you to Mail Boxes Etc. 29 Castle Street, Kingston, KT1 1DN, for printing *Church News*
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You can keep in touch with worship and activities at our church through our website:
www.kingstonurc.org. You can also follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

To make a financial donation to Kingston URC, please see inside back cover

Kingston United Reformed Church - information

A warm invitation is given to all who read this magazine to come and share in our services and activities

The Sanctuary is also open for private prayer, with access via the Foyer.

Our Foyer is normally open every weekday and Saturday from 11.00 until 14.00 for coffee and tea.

Need to talk to someone about a problem or concern? There is sometimes a designated listener available in the Foyer; if not, please speak to the coffee server or contact Lesley Charlton.

Our Sunday services

10.00 – Traditional Worship
(with communion first Sunday monthly)

11.30 – All Age Worship
(with communion on the last Sunday monthly)

18.30 – Reflective Worship
(with communion on the third Sunday monthly)

On the **second Sunday** of each month a **combined service at 10.30** replaces the 10.00 and 11.30 services

Tea and coffee are served between the 10.00 and 11.30 services, before the 10.30 service on the second Sunday, and after the 18.30 service

During the 10.00, 10.30 and 11.30 services there are **group activities for children** of all ages. Visiting children are welcome to join them

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Catherine Treweek

Operations Assistant:

Gaffar Zarei

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Treasurer:

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