



The
United
Reformed
Church

CHURCH NEWS

February 2021

Kingston United Reformed Church
www.kingstonurc.org



The 21st century comes of age
See page 14 for readers' own coming of age stories

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Worship diary: February 2021

At the time of writing (early January 2021) Kingston and the rest of London are subject to Tier 5 Covid-19 restrictions and the subsequent declaration of Major Incident status. Consequently, the church building is not open for either private prayer or Sunday services until further notice. BUT as a church and a community KURC is still very much open and there is a wide range of worship and other activities available online. Please see the table below and check www.kingstonurc.org regularly for any changes.

For **Zoom IDs and passwords**, please refer to Catherine Treweek's weekly emails sent out on Fridays. And contact Catherine – kingstonurc@gmail.com / 07808 351 801 (10.00 – 16.00 weekdays only) to be added to our mailing list.

Sunday	10.30 <i>Zoom</i>	Worship and communion , followed by opportunities to chat in breakout rooms. The sermon is also available, as live, via www.kingstonurc.org at any time
Any time	<i>Email</i>	Links to worship resources for use with children/young people are circulated each week by email. Email Sally Butler, youth@kingstonurc.org for details
Daily	<i>Email</i>	Daily prayers by email Please contact Teresa James if you would like to receive these
Monday - Saturday	14.00 <i>Zoom</i>	Online prayers
Wednesday	10.00 <i>YouTube</i>	Tots' Praise. Email youth@kingstonurc.org for links
Wednesday	19.30 20.00 <i>Zoom</i>	Bible study – Stuart Chandler's session Bible study – Rachel Mason's session Contact Stuart Chandler for details and links
Thursday	20.00 <i>Zoom</i>	Janine's Thursday night soirée. Relaxed chat. Contact Janine – as below
Daily	11.00 (11.30 on Sundays) <i>Skype</i>	Coffee morning. An informal opportunity to catch up with KURC friends or make new ones. (Sunday's coffee mornings start shortly after end of 10.30 service.) Contact Janine Goddard for links: janine.goddard@me.com / 07837 390330
Regularly	<i>Email or WhatsApp</i>	Messages and requests for prayer from Lesley. If you would like to be included in these regular communications, please <i>contact Lesley Charlton.</i>

Cover illustration by Alice Impey

Letter from Lesley

Dear All,



Jesus born in a stable and dies on a cross. What a weak foolish story.

What does strength look like? You! When are you weak and when are you strong?

Is the strong person the one who goes in fists flying or the one who withdraws? Of course few of us literally fist fight but many of us hurt just as much as that with our words. Is it strong to force your view or to put effort into working out your method, to think about the other and then take the cause forward?

On the 28th we called the doctor to give my father something as his brow was furrowed and the medical expert thought a bit of something might be good. The doctor said his death could well be tonight or tomorrow.

We kept shifts and made sure that my father had someone with him as he was dying. Of course Covid meant that responsibility fell on fewer than it would have done, but hey we will recover. Anyway, the doctor said 28th/29th December. He died on the 3/1. People said – ‘how strong he is’. Strong? He is an old man breathing in and out – how is that strong? But strong is the word used. That basic physical strength was there.

The person who asserts their views loudly and forcefully and does not listen to another. Are they strong or weak?

Or, the person who lets another speak and then asks a question which indicates they have been listening and that there might be a different point of view. Which is weak and which is strong?

There is a story of a preacher who used to put in the margin, ‘argument weak here - raise voice’.

Jesus born in a stable and hanging on a cross.

In our lives where we feel isolated and irrelevant maybe we can do things that eternally will make a difference. Things that to others look weak and foolish. Who shall we support? Who shall we pray for? What causes shall we give our money to? Who shall we encourage? We might feel small; that does not mean we are eternally or little value. Or small with God’s lens.

Jesus born in a stable and Herod born in palace. One is designated King by the world rulers and one is unknown. But strangely it is the unknown one who dies on a cross who turns the world upside down. What then is strength and what is weakness?

Yours,

Lesley

Sally's Slot!

Just a quick update for you. I'm still working part time and also partially on furlough. We had a remarkably busy run up to Christmas though!

Tots Praise continues. We stream to YouTube live at 10am and people tune in or watch it later in the day/week. This has been more popular than when we did it on Zoom and opened the group up to people who could never attend on a Wednesday. I get texts during the session to say they are watching and I sometimes get photos sent to me of children dancing in front of their laptops, with me in the background!

Lesley had the idea of (a) delivering Christingle packs and (b) getting people to knit sheep, having seen Linda's sheep! Thanks to Steve Wenman for making up the pretty packs (all the materials plus instructions for people who could not make it to the service itself and an explanation sheet) and to Linda and her team for knitting sheep and labelling them with a nice Christmas greeting from us. Lesley and Bron (thank you) and I sorted through them and then went round the Borough delivering packs, which were gratefully received. We delivered 36 packs and I really enjoyed seeing the families again and having a natter on the doorstep. We delivered to New Malden, Surbiton, Ham, Kingston and Teddington! We had a great turnout after that at our Zoom Christingle service, with lots of Tots Praise, Messy Church and Stay & Play families joining in from home. Plus we saw a couple of Grandmas joining in; one from South Africa, ensuring her daughter and grand-daughter were making the Christingle properly!!

I contacted another church to ask if I could use their song, 'Christingle Jingle', as I had seen it on Facebook. They agreed and so we sang that, after we had made our Christingles. I did like it but it did stick in my head for quite a while afterwards!!

I have continued to do the Introduction to the theme each week and have been sending resources to our families to do at home.

We ran our first Messy Christmas At Home session; attended by two families but will be repeated. We hope more of them will re-join now that Christmas is over. It works perfectly well on Zoom.

I am continuing to work with a team from other local churches to record an assembly on Zoom which is sent to St. Luke's School. The teachers love it as well as the kids and there is talk that they may send it to children's homes during the lockdown for all the family to watch!

I have been organising a daily play date of about an hour for two children whose parents both have Covid. This is to provide respite for the parents. It is a mix of songs, videos, games, chat, stories and Pictionary using the Zoom Whiteboard function (which I love!!) We are now hoping to run one which will be open to all our families now that they are struggling, being stuck at home all day, trying to work/study etc.

I helped, with a parent who used to come to Stay & Play, with the Christmas Day takeaway lunch. This was organised by Holly and Julien. All the food went to needy homes and the leftover (not very much) got taken round Kingston and given to the homeless. It was a good thing to do as no other church was doing anything on the day, this year.

Thank you to all the people who have helped this last month.

I hope to bring in new projects. We had a good response to a survey that we sent out and I think we now need to get those up and running. Watch this space!

Sally Butler
Children, Youth and Families Worker

Pastoral News - February to March 2021

So here we are in 2021 and it does seem very much like Groundhog Day when we keep on repeating the same routines. We are now in our third lockdown and sadly some members of church have contracted Covid.

We have been shocked by the death of Nigel Tunley, a faithful friend to many and a devoted member of church. (John Fisher has written a piece about Nigel in this issue.)

We were also sad to hear of the death of Rev. Lesley Charlton's father. Thankfully Lesley and Ray were with him for the last few days of his life. Please remember Lesley, her mum, family and friends mourning his loss.

Give thanks for

- the vaccine programme and its gradual roll out nationwide
- the various online activities and opportunities to 'meet' one another
- the network of supportive relationships within the church family

**Out of care for people's privacy,
names are not included
in the Pastoral News section of the
online Church News**

Sue Shaw

Nigel Tunley 1949-2021



Nigel was born in Brisbane, Australia, his parents having emigrated there from England just after the war. The family moved on to Adelaide where Nigel went to school, played the organ at his local church and studied music at the university. In 1972 Nigel decided to sample life in England and obtained employment at Unilever, Blackfriars. His parents eventually followed. When his father died in the late 70s Nigel and his mother settled in Hanworth Road, Whitton. They found a church they liked at Kingston URC - not exactly 'round the corner', so the attraction must

have been strong.

Nigel was soon drawn into the life of KURC as assistant organist and as a bass singer in the choir. He was also a keen founder-member of the badminton club. When he retired he involved himself in the coffee bar, stewarding, the listening service, pastoral visiting, services at the Star and Garter Home, the music committee, and the worship group. Latterly he joined the finance team as Gift Aid administrator where he admitted to being well outside his comfort zone. With typical tenacity he succeeded in mastering the complexities of the computer systems.

Music was always his primary interest and passion – he sang in many choirs over the years, including the Malcolm Sargent Choir (which afforded opportunities for foreign travel), Teddington Choral Society and Cantanti Camerati, where he made a wide circle of friends. He often helped out at Hampton Hill URC and other local churches when they needed an organist. He gave an acclaimed piano recital at our church a few years ago and was busy planning another. Recently he had joined the K3A Orchestra as a percussionist and made his debut playing the sleigh bells in Delius' 'Sleigh Ride'

Nigel was a quiet, gentle, reliable and extremely conscientious person who was always thinking of others. He was friendly and sociable and there was a keen sense of humour lurking beneath the surface: his impressions of Prince Charles and Victor Meldrew made many people double up with laughter. He will be very greatly missed.

John Fisher

Picture: Nigel makes his debut as a percussionist at the K3A Orchestra Christmas Concert in All Saints

Project Larry

It was Lesley's idea – why don't we get a group together to knit sheep to give to our children at Christmas? Off we went with a pattern, chunky wool, size 4mm needles and quite a lot of stuffing. A brilliant team of Ann Braine, Carol Clack, Madge Cole, Liz Cook, Ray Erskine, Camilo Fernandes, Pat Foster, Janine Goddard, Margaret Golding, Ann Macfarlane, Bron Robinson, Cathy Seymour, Sue Shipton and Christine Wise knitted away to produce over 30 sheep. A sheep was added to each of the Christingle presents which were delivered to the families. Each sheep had its own character and the children were delighted. Thank you to all those who helped make this happen – it was born out of the pandemic and created much joy and happiness.

Linda Austin





Individual portraits

KURC's Knitting Circle

A big thank you to all our knitters for knitting nearly 30 sheep for the youngest in our church as a gift from us all for Christmas:

Linda Austin
Ann Braine
Carol Clack
Madge Cole
Liz Cook
Ray Erskine
Camilo Fernandes
Pat Foster

Janine Goddard
Margaret Golding
Ann Macfarlane
Bron Robinson
Cathy Seymour
Sue Shipton
Christine Wise



Thank you from Lesley

We are grateful to so many people over this season for all their efforts many of which no one notices. Recording music, hosting/leading bible studies, coffee mornings, prayer times, entertaining children as their parents recover from Covid, calling people who are isolated, sending emails and texts, videoing, letting people into Zoom rooms. There is no sense that what we do is perfection. We have all had to learn quickly and for many of us without training.

Thank you.

If you feel that you could do something else and you do not know what that something is, speak to Lesley.

Thank you for your efforts. We are a grateful community. Grateful to one another and grateful to God who drew us together.

“ Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow.”
- Albert Einstein

News from Sulhee



Sulhee sends her greetings and best wishes for 2021. Her family are all well, and she now has a new niece. She has her own flat in Seoul and is very busy juggling a variety of jobs. Her main source of income is piano teaching: ‘I enjoy it very much. Every student is lovely and adorable’, she says. In addition to playing piano at her local church she gives English lessons, teaches her recently acquired barista (coffee-making) skills to the disabled, and assists her uncle who leads a Korean church in Serbia.

Sulhee says: ‘I ran up a huge debt of love from Kingston URC that I can’t possibly forget. I think about KURC almost every day’. Recently she met up with Martyn and He Yeon and sent this photo.

Elder's profile – Ray Erskine

Each month Church News likes to include a profile if one of KURC's serving elders. For this edition, we had the good fortune to be able to persuade Ray Erskine to write about herself. You can read her story below.



Many of you will know me, but to those who do not I am Ray Erskine and you have elected me to serve as an Elder.

I was born and raised in Saltcoats, a small town on the west coast of North Ayrshire on the Firth of Clyde and about 25 miles from Glasgow. The town gets its name from its earliest industry of harvesting salt from the sea; this process was carried out in cottages along the shore.

Church has always been a part of my life, being taken there from an early age by my parents who were highly active in the life and work of Saltcoats North Parish church where I attended Sunday school, Girls Brigade and youth fellowship.

On leaving school my chosen career path led me into nursing. I trained at Glasgow Royal Infirmary, and on qualifying as a registered general nurse I continued to work there as a staff nurse before moving to undergo midwifery training at the Queen Mother's Hospital. I enjoyed working with the mothers and babies, but my real calling was surgical nursing, so I returned to the GRI, staffing on a male ward before moving to Kingston to take up the post of ward sister on a surgical unit. I spent the rest of my working days at Kingston. Over the years I saw many changes, the work was challenging but rewarding and no two days were ever the same.

It was not until I retired that I started taking a more active part in the life of KURC, initially helping on the coffee bar. I received an invitation to visit a session of Parents and Toddlers and from there I started helping with the group, eventually becoming its secretary.

I was first elected to be an Elder in the first decade of the century. My most recent period of service was from 2013 to 2016, when I stepped down until my re-election last year. I was surprised when Lesley told me that I had been elected. In late October at an evening service we, the new elders, were ordained and inducted. I now look forward to serving God and KURC in whatever way I am able in these challenging times.

Ray Erskine

On doing our best

The notion of 'doing our best', as the shield (excuse?) for everything, surfaced in *Church News*, in July 2018. It seems to be doing the rounds again, lately. I think it's dangerous, and I really wonder how much space it is safe to give it?

'Is it possible that the person who sent you that email, who failed to do the administrative task you asked, who...,etc, etc,.. is a person who is doing the best they can?'

Well, of course, it is possible. And sometimes it may not matter that much. And sometimes we can offer comfort and support.

But when it's the pilot whose plane was damaged on take-off; or the nurse whose patient (*me!*) is leaking all over the floor; or the architect whose building is unsafe, then I'd suggest that the response is not, 'Ah, bless..., they're doing their best!'

Why should the response not be, 'This may be your best, but I'm afraid it's not good enough.' ? This is difficult, but serious failures, especially in critically dangerous, exposed or influential situations, simply have to be pulled into line.

The early church recognised this, and spent a huge amount of time and effort countering heresy and error, and to this day, any organisation that lacks the will, or the administrative or pastoral skills, to straighten out such errors does not have much of a future.

On the whole I'd much prefer to re-focus Lesley Charlton's exhortation to be 'aspiring to excellence', as extolled in *Church News* September 2017.

John Watts

A craft group?

After our successful sheep-knitting activity, we are thinking that it would be great to establish a craft group. Would you like to join? Do you have a craft skill you would like to share or learn? For the time being it will be 'virtual' but later we will be able to meet in person. Do let me know if you have any ideas or would like to be involved.

Linda Austin

‘Silence speaks louder than words’

Connie Sheow has sent Church News the cautionary tale below which is a timely reminder of the value of togetherness (by whatever means) in these troubled times.

A member of a church, who previously had been attending services regularly, stopped going. After a few weeks, the pastor decided to visit him.

It was a chilly evening. The pastor found the man at home alone, sitting before a blazing fire. Guessing the reason for his pastor's visit, the man welcomed him, led him to a comfortable chair near the fireplace and waited.

The pastor made himself at home but said nothing. In the grave silence, he contemplated the dance of the flames around the burning logs. After some minutes, the pastor took the fire tongs, carefully picked up a brightly burning ember and placed it to one side of the hearth all alone then he sat back in his chair, still silent.

The host watched all this in quiet contemplation. As the one lone ember's flame flickered and diminished, there was a momentary glow and then its fire was no more. Soon it was cold and dead.

Not a word had been spoken since the initial greeting. The pastor glanced at his watch and realised it was time to leave. He slowly stood up, picked up the cold, dead ember and placed it back in the middle of the fire. Immediately it began to glow, once more with the light and warmth of the burning coals around it.

As the pastor reached the door to leave, his host said with a tear running down his cheek, 'Thank you so much for your visit and especially for the fiery sermon. I will be back in church next Sunday.'

We live in a world today, which tries to say too much with too little. Consequently, few listen. Sometimes the best lessons are the ones left unspoken.

Archive of the month



This photo from the Surrey Comet of 1974 shows the dramatic end of Surbiton Park Congregational Church at the corner of Grove Road and Maple Road. The building had closed in 1966, the few remaining members joining our congregation. It was several years before the site was sold. The proceeds helped to pay for many of the alterations made to Kingston URC in the mid-1970s

NOT EVERYTHING IS CANCELLED...

sunshine is not cancelled
love is not cancelled
relationships are not cancelled
reading is not cancelled
naps are not cancelled
going for a walk is not cancelled
kindness is not cancelled
imagination is not cancelled
conversations are not cancelled
HOPE is not cancelled

(Courtesy of Natasha)

21st birthday memories

“Out with the old and in with the new”. Well-chosen words to greet 2021, both in its own right and as the coming-of-age year of the 21st century. They invite us to look forward rather than back, and most of us will be glad to do so. But Church News always enjoys peeping into the past’s dustier corners and so invited its readers to remove the dustsheets from their own 21st birthday memories in celebration of this rite of passage for the current century. Thank you to those who took a deep breath and spilled the beans.

Ann Macfarlane

A very unusual 21st birthday. No big celebrations, no birthday cake. What did I want? A friend from Norfolk. My mother agreed to support Sadie for a week and it was an unforgettable experience. On my 21st, the queen drove along the A3 to Sandhurst Park. My home fronted the A3, and as she passed, Sadie and I sat outside in our wheelchairs, ready to wave. The queen waved back, which made Sadie’s day particularly very special indeed.

Anon

Sorry folks - all impossibly hazy...! Where? When? With whom...??
Maybe best not disclosed, even if I could remember!!

Camilo Fernandez

On my 21st birthday, I was working for British Airways based at Hatton Cross. At that time, Hatton Cross wasn't built and I had to catch 2 buses and change of tubes to get to work as I was living in Wembley at that time. My colleagues had decorated my desk before I got to work. I found it hard to do any work with my desk full of cards, gifts, streamers and balloons. This birthday was the best of all birthdays as my mum came to London from Canada for my birthday and my Auntie who lived in Wembley had a party for me. I received well over 100 birthday cards. Unfortunately, I can't find any photos.

Cathy Seymour

My 21st birthday celebrations. (1973)

I had a party. School friends, friends from college, family and neighbours came. I had been married just over a year and the party was in our flat. Music was important. Played using the record player! Food included cheese and pineapple on sticks and vol-au-vents, all prepared at home.

I could already vote and had the key to the door so no real milestones to celebrate. Just a “need” to party.

Luckily there were no mobile phones so no photo to support my memories.

Christine Thompson

I graduated a few months before I was 21 and continued living in Manchester. So did a lot of my friends. So I was able to have friends from the past 3 years and new friends at my 21st Birthday party. I had a smaller family celebration back in Liverpool with my family another weekend. I was living in a top floor flat in a residential house so not suitable for a birthday party. I arranged to use a friend's rented house where you could make as much noise as we wanted. It then turned out that friend's boyfriend was planning another party on the same night in his flat. We considered merging them but decided that would be too complicated. So I had my party and then went on to the last hour of his. The Beatles were just taking over from Gerry and the Pacemakers as the well-known Liverpool sound so the main thing I remember of that night was a constant background of Beatles songs (can't remember which ones). And the other event of that month was Kennedy's assassination.

Jean Thompson



Liverpool, 1958. Around 20 young friends from the church (known as 'the gang') plus cousins and school friends went to Reece's Grill (popular at the time) in the city for a meal before going to the Playhouse Theatre to see "The Time of the Cuckoo", a comedy by Arthur Laurents, set in Venice.
Photo – cutting the cake beforehand.

Lesley Charlton

For us, Lesley, Danny and John, my brothers and I, on our birthdays there was whatever we wanted for dinner. Sausages, fish fingers and chips being a favourite with my brothers. I always had my mother's moussaka.

And a cake.

Always for our birthday our mother made a cake in the shape we wanted. Mine was usually a house. For my 21st she made me a large house and an outside toilet. The outside toilet was for me to take back to Oxford.

By the time I was 21 I was already training for the ministry. I had to get special permission to take time off to go to the North East for my party.

For my present my parents bought me furniture towards furnishing my manse.- yes you are right it is nuts that someone at 20 should be training for ministry - but hey ho. God is surprising.

Linda Austin

My 21st birthday fell on a Sunday. We were in the thick of rehearsals for the musical 'Spirit'. I don't remember anything about the morning service but we (about 50 of us) assembled in the afternoon for the dress rehearsal and a sort of celebration for my birthday - cake and all. It was great and memorable. A few of you may well remember it.

Margaret Golding (as recounted by her daughter, Sue Shipton – see below)

In January 1954 my mother, then Margaret Johnson, had her 21st birthday party in the upstairs hall in the old church buildings. There were lots of people from the church's YF, as well as family members. They danced, played games and had a finger buffet prepared by her mother, Grace Johnson and Phyllis Johnson, a paternal aunt who also did the YF catering. Cecil Davis was in charge of photography and Allen Johnson, her brother, organised the music. She hadn't met my father yet as he was away on National Service in Kuala Lumpur.

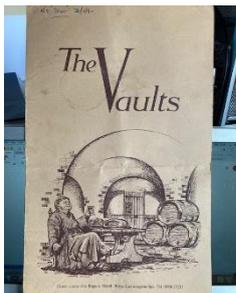
Natasha & John Reid

Unfortunately, we do not celebrate 21st birthdays in my country. And I think that I went to Africa at that stage.

I asked John and he said that nothing specific happened when he was 21. He knows that he worked in the bank in Kilmarnock and that's all. We are very boring people!

Nick & Bron Robinson

Nick celebrated with his family (parents, brother and sister in law who was expecting their first child) by going out for a meal to the Regent Hotel in Leamington Spa. Nick was at Warwick university and a large number of students lived in Leamington. He did keep the menu from that meal and we've been looking for it today, but it's in the large cupboard of stuff that must not be mentioned, the clearing out of which is supposed to be one of our lockdown projects! [←SUCCESS!]



Bron was living in France during the run-up to her 21st (year out from university) so left the booking of a party venue to her boyfriend, the above-mentioned Nick. She arrived back in Leamington a couple of days before the party and left a couple of days after to return to the south of France, this time as an au pair for 2 months. She got the best tan of her life that summer, as the family had a pool in the garden and entertaining the 4 x under 5's (yes, you have read that right!) was mainly around the pool. Luckily the baby couldn't walk yet, the 2 oldest ones could swim like fishes and so it was mainly just the 2 year old to keep an eye on.

Peter Ashdown

Peter's 21st was just a single day in an extraordinarily challenging year whose story he tells on page 18.

Sally Blandford

My family and I celebrated my 21st birthday by going to one of the wonderful Fêtes Champêtres that the National Trust used to hold at Claremont Landscape Garden in Esher.

We strolled in the romantic lakeside setting, enjoying the food and entertainment, music and fireworks.

They used to be wonderful events and I expect quite a few KURC members will have happy memories of attending them. There was often a special theme and many guests wore fancy dress.

Sally Butler

I was at University and we piled loads of food and drink into my friend's tiny Mini and drove to nearby Greenwich Park for a massive picnic with loads of student friends. Afterwards, we started playing rounders and one member of the public caught the ball and started to join in, so we went round asking everyone nearby to join us. Don't know how many people there are officially supposed to be in a rounders team but ours was HUGE! What a laugh!!

Sharon Henriquez-Vernon

Always wanting to see things that I've read about, I went to NY for my 21st with my best friend, and stayed with my uncle, whom I had never met. My friend and I couldn't have looked more different. She had ginger hair, very fair with freckles, we were both dressed the same, in different colours to suit our complexions, walking with our arms linked. When I asked my uncle why people were staring at us, he said it was because cultures didn't really mix. My uncle, slightly concerned as NY was 'hostile', sent us off with an armoury of advice. 'Don't make eye contact', 'don't speak due to English accents, 'be in by 6pm'. We travelled by subway, going to the various areas, we managed to get to all 5 boroughs and went to places that my uncle hadn't been to, having lived in NY for over 40 years. I really found the concept of cultures not meeting, odd, but fascinating. As a birthday treat, my uncle and auntie booked a dinner boat package for us all, where we sailed around Manhattan, and Liberty Island. It was breath taking! It was autumn, the sun was setting when we set off. After the meal we went out on deck, it was dark and slightly foggy (now I think it was pollution). With the skyscrapers, the fog and Lady Liberty shining her light, it was absolutely stunning! It was a hard-hitting place, but fabulous!

Reminder: Copy for the next edition of *Church News* should reach Jean Thompson by Friday 12 February

Sue Shaw

When I was 21 I had a joint birthday party with another Sue, a school class mate who I first met when I was eleven. Our families clubbed together so we could all go out to an Indian restaurant which was quite adventurous then. We are still in touch to this day. Here we are forty years on and still good friends in spite of living 200 miles apart.



Sue Shipton

I had my 21st birthday party in the church hall in March 1978. We had a barn dance with lots of family and friends attending. There was a buffet too, so probably quite similar to my mother's celebration!

Teresa James

My 21st birthday celebration was very small, restrained and modest – just me, my parents and a few local friends of my parents who had known me for most of my life. In retrospect a bit of a non-event, even though traditionally a 21st birthday was considered an occasion worth celebrating in a big way.

Being a 'July baby' I had left school when still 'only' 17 and three years later at 20 I left Teacher Training College. I turned 21 during the summer bridging my student days and the world of work. I was aware I was being thrown into an unsheltered real world.



That summer I emigrated from a cathedral city on the south coast, Chichester, to start a new life working in a large London comprehensive school and embrace the joys of the metropolis as a Londoner, initially based off High Street Kensington (!).

Carefree '60s students (Teresa and her younger brother Christopher) during a rare period when they were both living in the same country.

Vaughan James

I was in my second term at university for my 21st birthday. For various reasons I was a year older than most of my university contemporaries and the first to celebrate my 21st birthday. I had no precedents to guide me so decided on a small wine and cheese party in my room. On reflection, I'm not quite so sure about the cheese bit, but I do remember the wine: an attractively metallic Algerian red, appealingly affordable at 3 bottles for £1. It proved to be noisily popular - but what else would you expect from a potent blend of sociable undergraduates and free drink? The noise proved magnetic and the numbers grew rapidly. I only narrowly avoided getting into trouble with the authorities but ended my birthday with an unexpectedly large number of new, albeit rather raucous, friends.

(S)he's got the key of the door, never been 21 before ...

Twenty-first birthdays had special significance because they were seen as the threshold of adulthood. Reaching the age of 21 meant you were considered old enough to be a key-holder to your family's home, and hold a 'senior' position in the family. 21 used to be the age of majority, when you were allowed to vote, marry without consent, and enter contracts. Although in 1969 it was lowered to 18, 21 is still an 'important' *birthday* and therefore a cause for celebration.

On Prince William's 21st in 2003 he gave an interview and released a few photographs and had a private but much-publicised bash at Windsor Castle. In contrast, his grandmother's 21st was declared a public holiday and marked by a broadcast to the Empire.

My 21st birthday year 1959

In February 1959 after a series of night sweats, I was diagnosed with pleurisy and sent to outpatients at Bart's hospital. After examination, I was told to go home and come back in three days. We lived in a flat over Bethnal Green Congregational church where Dad was the minister. Just after I got home the doorbell rang. I ran down 3 floors to open the door to a telegraph boy with a telegram (the only one I ever received) telling me to get to Bart's at 8am next morning as I had TB.

On arrival, I was put to bed as bedrest was a treatment for TB. From that day I never put a foot on the floor until mid-July. Bedpans, bottles and bedbaths filled the day, along with injections of the new wonder drug, Streptomycin, on alternate days. This is now known to make you go deaf twenty-five to thirty years later (that sounds familiar!) I also took six large rice paper capsules of Pasinh twice a day.

In Bart's I was considered 'unclean', so first thing in the morning my bed and I were pushed out onto a balcony till supper at 6pm. When it snowed they put a rubber sheet over the bed and left me to it. TB was so infectious that Mum and Dad, my brother John and Jean all had to have a chest x-ray.

In April I was transferred to Brompton Chest Hospital, into a square ward of 10 beds. As we all had TB it was more comfortable, but I was still not allowed up. Then June arrived, and my 21st Birthday party on the ward. Dad and Mum came and brought a birthday present for me - one of the new transistor radios. The hospital chef made a birthday cake and sandwiches. Dad had been a lay preacher for many years before taking exams for the ministry and being ordained. Bethnal Green was his third church, so he wrote around saying I was having my 21st in Brompton Hospital and could they send a card. In the end over 100 cards arrived. The nurses hung them from the curtain rails around my bed. It became a thing of wonder among the nurses all over the hospital. In the fifties 21st birthdays were the most significant; not the 18th as now. Soon afterwards I opened a letter instructing me to go an office in London for a medical to do my National Service. I showed it to a nurse who ran out to show the doctor and I heard no more about it. As I was signed up for a six-year apprenticeship, I had been deferred until my 21st birthday.

The summer of 1959 was a heatwave with tar melting on the roads and chocolate not setting at Cadburys.

During July I was told I could get out of bed at last and sit in chair for one hour each morning for a week. The next week it was one hour in the

morning and afternoon. After four weeks sitting I started short walks. First one then two walks a day, and on to long walks around the hospital grounds. All this walking meant I was now considered fit enough to do three weeks of gardening. Now being October, this meant sweeping up leaves and taking them to a compost heap. Now I was fit to return to the world. The next two Saturdays meant a bus to Guildford for shopping and lunch out.

I was back home in time for Christmas. I could not return to work for six months so I learned to drive. Back to Bart's in the new year to see the consultant. He said "You're cured!" but I still must go in for an x-ray every three months and I must take the Pasinh for two more years.

Peter Ashdown

A mask prayer

*The Revd Richard Bolt, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Canada,
an international partner of the URC,
has written this prayer for putting on a face mask.*

Creator God,
As I prepare to go into the world,
help me to see the sacramental nature of wearing this cloth.
Let it be a tangible and visible way of living love for my neighbours,
as I love myself.

Christ Jesus, since my lips will be covered, uncover my heart,
that people would see my smile in the crinkles around my eyes.

Since my voice may be muffled, help me to speak clearly,
not only with my words, but with my actions.

Holy Spirit, as the elastic touches my ears,
remind me to listen carefully and caringly to all those I meet.

May my simple piece of cloth be a shield and a banner,
and may each breath that it holds be filled with your love.

In your love and in that love I pray.

Amen

From URC News Update, December 2020 - January 2021

Please note that Liz and Ron Cook have a new email address:
lizronhatch5@gmail.com

Unusual churches of the world



While others have written about spectacular churches in far flung places, I thought readers might be interested in learning about one closer to home.

On one of our socially distanced walks last summer, John and I came across Reigate Heath Windmill Church – possibly the only windmill in the world which is a consecrated church. Built c. 1765 and last worked by wind in 1862, the roundhouse was converted into a chapel of ease to St Mary's Parish Church, Reigate in 1880 with the first service taking place in September of that year. The land, including the windmill, was purchased by Reigate Heath Golf Club c. 1900 and the

windmill was leased back to the church with the Golf Club continuing to maintain the structure. This situation continued until 1962 when the windmill was sold to Reigate Borough Council as the cost of repairs was becoming too onerous for the club. Restoration work, including the fitting of four new sails, was completed in 1964. There was a further major overhaul in 2000.

Although sadly closed due to Covid-19 when we visited, it is usually possible to borrow a key from the adjacent clubhouse and look inside. Sunday services are held once a month during the summer months and the annual carol service attracts up to 90 people. We look forward to returning when the church re-opens. However, after a painful encounter with a golf ball on our last visit, we will approach from a different direction next time!



Ruth Anderson

“I am the very model of a model major general”

Version on climate change for August 2007 Buxton event

Thank you Christine Thompson for supplying the following adaptation of Gilbert & Sullivan’s well-known piece which, although now some 15 years old, seems more relevant than ever.

I am the very model of a modern caring head of state
I’ve studied the statistics which illuminate our carbon rates
I’m lobbied by the scientists and pilloried by media
For fiddling while the planet burns and people just get greedier.
My words are fine and dandy, but my actions less spectacular
For I could get hung out to dry (permit me the vernacular)
So I’m dead keen on summits and negotiating turns of phrase,
But I intend to keep on flying for work and my holidays!

Chorus:

*But he’ll keep right on flying for his work and for his holidays!
But he’ll keep right on flying for his work and for his holidays!
But he’ll keep right on flying for his work and for his work and holidays!*

My people have got used to lives of richness and variety
How can I ask them to adopt a measure of sobriety?
I talk to them of footprints and they think I mean the shoey kind
When they should just appreciate the impact that we leave behind.

Chorus:

*He talks to us of footprints and we think he means the shoey kind
When we should just appreciate the impact that they leave behind.*

I’ve seen the graphs go on and up in Powerpoint and Al Gore’s slides
The carbon in our atmosphere will leave us with no place to hide.
Our friends abroad are telling us that crops fail cos the sun is hot
And then they moan about the floods because it seems it rains a lot.
They threaten to move in with us if life becomes unbearable
Well we can’t make much space for them we need it for our wearables
We keep the Chinese busy making more and more consumables
And then we blame them for the news that earth itself ain’t durable.

Chorus:

*And then we blame them for the news that Earth itself ain’t durable.
And then we blame them for the news that Earth itself ain’t durable.
And then we blame them, blame them for the news that Earth itself ain’t durable.*

We’ve drafted legislation for the cutting back of carbon gas
We’ve made it voluntary so it won’t upset the voting mass
We’ve thought about new lamp bulbs and of turning off appliances
If you ask me we’ve done our bit, you know you can rely on us.

Chorus:

*We've thought about new lamp bulbs and of turning off appliances
If you ask him he's done his bit and now he must rely on us*

I really feel it's up to you to take it on and make it work
We're only politicians and we need help to see through the mirk
Of obfuscation, countervailing arguments and clamouring
From vested interest, apathy and controversial yammering.
Don't look at me to take the lead, you know I've got a job to do
Of building an economy and maybe wage a war or two.
Our GNP goes up and up no matter if we spend or waste
It's hard for me to face up to decisions to be made in haste

Chorus:

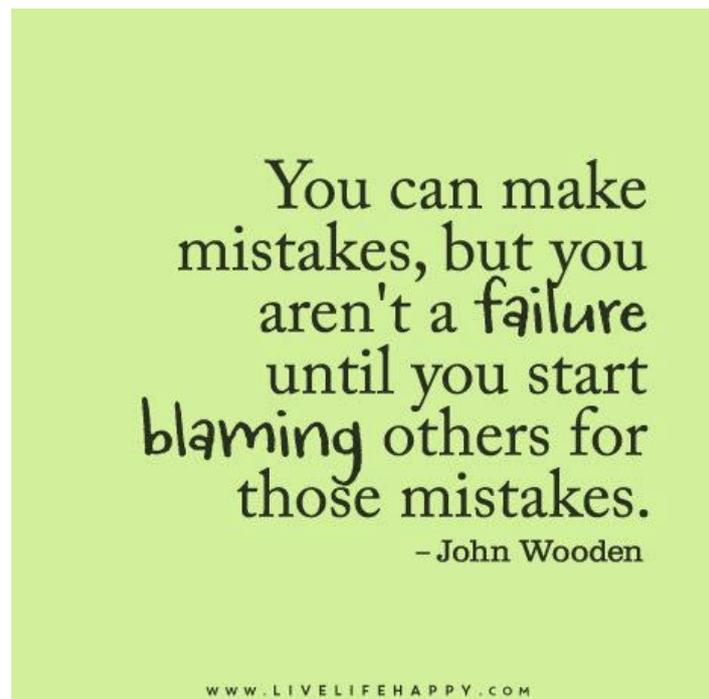
*It's hard for him to measure up, decisions must be made in haste
It's hard for him to measure up, decisions must be made in haste
It's hard for him, it's hard for him, it's hard for him to measure up*

So offer me some evidence that illustrates you really care
That you will take the hardest road and look to me to meet you there.
I need to know you're serious, that you can make the lifestyle choice
To build a better planet which includes those who don't have a voice.

Chorus:

*He needs to know we're serious, that we can make the lifestyle choice
To build a better planet which includes those who don't have a voice.*

**Music: Arthur Sullivan
Words: Sue Richardson**





readings for February 2021

THE PSALMS OF DAVID

Chosen and chased

Sunday 31 January	Ps 18:1-19	David's song
Monday 1 February	1 Sam 16:14-23	David the sweet singer
Tuesday 2 February	1 Sam 22:1-5	David hiding out with rebels
Wednesday 3 February	Ps 57	prayer and praise in the cave
Thursday 4 February	1 Sam 23:14-29	pursued by Saul to Ziph
Friday 5 February	Ps 54	betrayed by the Ziphites
Saturday 6 February	1 Sam 24:1-7 (8-20)	David spares Saul's life

Broken open

Sunday 7 February	Ps 142	second cave prayer
Monday 8 February	2 Sam 11:1-15	David and Bathsheba
Tuesday 9 February	Ps 51	David repents
Wednesday 10 February	2 Sam 15:13-23	Fleeing from Absalom
Thursday 11 February	Ps 3	prayer while fleeing
Friday 12 February	2 Sam 15:24-30	Fleeing from Absalom (pt 2)
Saturday 13 February	Ps 63	David in the wilderness

INTO THE UNKNOWN: THE SPIRIT OF DISCIPLESHIP

First steps

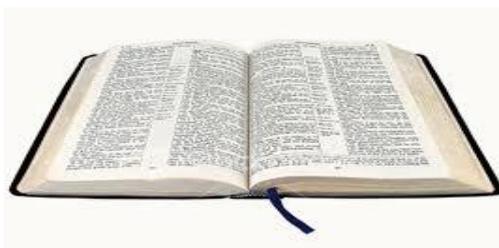
Sunday 14 February	Luke 5:1-11	Following the call
Monday 15 February	John 15:9-16	I chose you
Tuesday 16 February	Jeremiah 1:4-10	Known in the womb
Wednesday 17 February (Ash Wednesday)	Ezekiel 37:1-14	can these bones live?
Thursday 18 February	Hosea 11:1-11	learning to walk
Friday 19 February	Ps 25	show me the way!
Saturday 20 February	Ps 71:1-9	God the midwife

Rooted and growing

Sunday 21 February	Ps 1	the two ways
Monday 22 February	Jeremiah 31:31-37	a new heart/mind
Tuesday 23 February	Ps 92:1-15	fruit in old age
Wednesday 24 February	Ps 119:9-16	path of purity
Thursday 25 February	Prov 3:13-26	a tree of life
Friday 26 February	Luke 2:41-52	Jesus learning and growing
Saturday 27 February	John 15:1-8	bearing fruit

Walking as one

Sunday 28 February	Leviticus 26:3-13	God and people walking
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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

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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 by the second Friday of the month.

The next copy deadline is Friday 12 February 2021. Editor: Jean Thompson:

jean@btinternet.com or churchnews@kingstonurc.org

FINANCIAL DONATIONS may be made to the church in a number of ways, including via our Virgin moneygiving page, accessible through via our website at www.kingstonurc.org. You can also pay directly into our bank account: sort code 20-46-76, account number 33054942. 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).

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 the final page