

CHURCH NEWS

April 2021

Kingston United Reformed Church

www.kingstonurc.org



“We should take comfort that while we may have more still to endure, better days will return: we will be with our friends again; we will be with our families again; we will meet again”.

HM The Queen address to the Nation on April 5th 2020

www.kingstonurc.org

Charity No. 1131880

This edition edited by Robin Pilbeam

Worship Diary: April 2021

At the time of writing (early-March) severe COVID-19 restrictions remain in place. 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 or 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 – Friday	14.00 <i>Zoom</i>	Online prayers
Monday	20.00 <i>Zoom</i>	Body, Mind and Soul Workout. Please contact Rosette Bali or Sally Butler for details
Every second Monday	19.30 <i>Zoom</i>	Meditation. Please contact Stuart Chandler stu_chandler@hotmail.com
Wednesday	10.00 <i>YouTube</i>	Tots' Praise. Email youth@kingstonurc.org for links
Wednesday	19.30 20.00 <i>Zoom</i>	Bible study – Ken Bartlett's & Stuart Chandler's session 'House Group'/Bible study – Rachel & James Mason's session Contact Stuart Chandler stu_chandler@hotmail.com for details and links
Thursday	20.00 <i>Zoom</i>	Janine's Thursday night soir�e. 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 contact Lesley Charlton.

Arrangements for Holy Week and Easter 2021

(Hah! Says God.....I have better plans for you....OK but this is our best shot at this stage. Things may well have to change).

During Holy week there will be a range of opportunities to worship Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday at 2 and 7 we will be using '[The Last Week](#)' by Borg and Crossan. On the same evenings at 8.30 there will be a service of Compline from All Saints The link is

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJryj09IDBZwgKvANM-illw?view_as=subscriber

Maundy Thursday

There will be a love feast jointly with the Methodists. Also at 7

Good Friday

We will not be having the walk of witness but maybe you could use your individual walk to reflect and remember the sacrifice

12 – 1pm there will be our usual ecumenical service with Methodist and Anglican friends. The theme – 'locked in a tomb.'

1pm – 2pm Messy Church

2pm – 3pm Reflection on the cross

Holy Saturday

there will be an Easter tea at **3pm** for which we expect to see your Easter bonnet

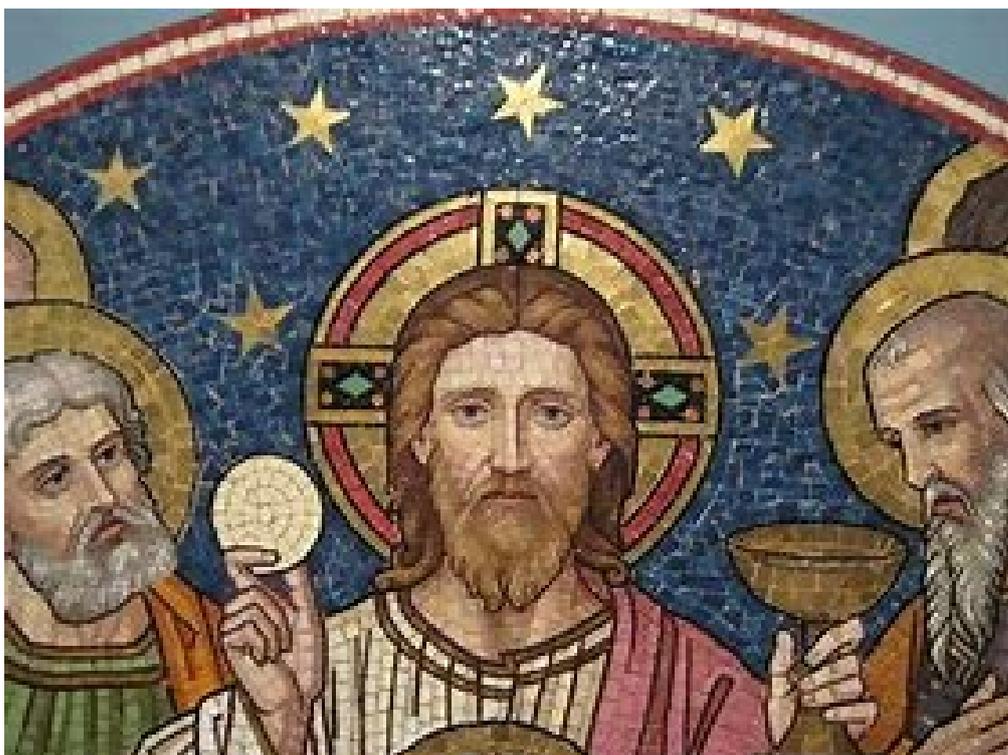
Easter Day

6.30 am Holy Communion – you really are allowed to come in your PJ's!!!!

9.00am We gather for breakfast

10.30am Easter morning Holy Communion

5.00pm in the building, Easter Reflection and Holy Communion



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Lesley's letter

Dear All,

We are about to change again. The way we had been living will stop and something new is going to happen. All these changes are draining. How to keep going?

It will be no shock to anyone that I have been reading/ watching things about resilience
3 markers of resilient people from Lucy Hone's Ted talk

1 Resilient people know that bad things happen. They know the reality of that.

2 they are thankful people indeed more than that they 'hunt the joy'. They have gratitude practices.

3 they ask themselves is what I am doing good for me? Is it helpful? Are those well-worn patterns of thinking, behaving – is that doing me good?



I would argue that in church life we are blessed because these things are all in our DNA. In the notices week by week we know that difficult things happen to people. People get ill. People die. We know that is true. Bad things happen.

Secondly, we have a practice whenever we gather to worship of saying thank you. Even if we do not feel like it we start our worship with God and gratitude. We sing a hymn of praise even if we are weeping inside.

Thirdly reflective practice is part of the life of faith. Why am I doing **this**? Why am I doing this? These are questions we are encouraged to ask. Not merely to shamble through life but to wonder about what is going on and then to change.

Currently we are in liminal times. In between times. For me this feels like Holy Saturday. The disciples know definitely that Jesus is dead. But they do not know what their future holds. Back to Nazareth or Capernaum? Back to fishing?

No. Something new was about to happen. Jesus was going to rise and life would never be as it had been. Like for us. Something new. It will not be the same. Change is definitely going to have to happen. Profound change for some of us. For some the people they love the most have died. For all of us God who is raised in the Christ on Easter morning will be with us and allowing us too to be transformed. Taking us from this season of death to new life.

Yours,

Lesley

Memo from Martyn

Do I see light at the end of the tunnel?! Did our light ever go out? It's now early March and ever since returning to the UK from Korea we've been in lockdown. It is starting to feel like the new normal!

By now I expect many of you will have had your first does of one of the vaccines. With the Prime Minister's statement outlining how we move out of lockdown and signs of Spring in the air things are starting to seem a bit more positive. It is lovely to see the first flowers appearing in the verges and gardens.

Yet we have seen the ongoing devastation the virus can cause and along the way we



have seen yet more friends suffer from the virus and some have died.

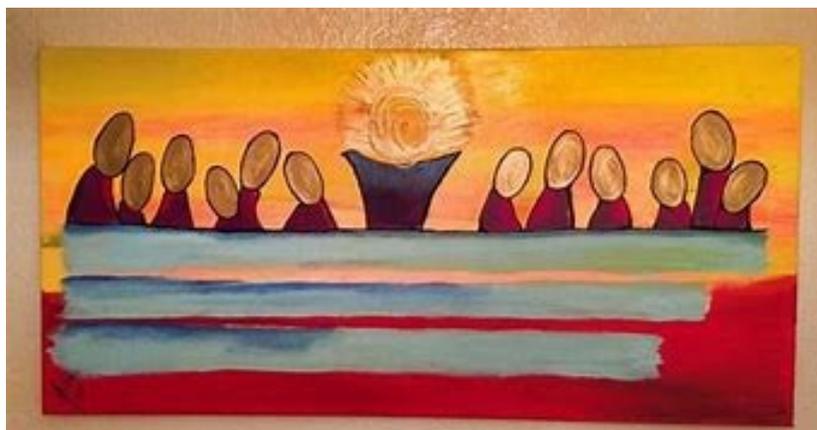
What is next for the church? What are the criteria for us in thinking about re-opening the building? What would we open it for? It is already in use for a limited number of things like the weekly lunches for the homeless.

What about for worship or private prayer? These are both things we could still legally do but have chosen not to. When will it be right for us to change this? These are not easy decisions so please pray for the Elders and ministers as we grapple with the issue.

Once the church is open again what about you? Are you ready to start meeting people again? Will you be keen to join live worship or will you hesitate, remaining in Zoom for a while longer? These are decisions for later perhaps.

In the meantime, I hope you are keeping safe and well but also keeping an eye open for opportunities to share the light that we've always had with us, with others.

Martyn Verge



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Pastoral News – at April 2021

“Let your hope keep you joyful, be patient in your troubles, and pray at all times.”

(Romans 12 v 12)



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

One Year on Where Were You on 5TH April, 2020?



Maria Callas – A personal prayer

“God help me
Give me what you want
I have no choice – good or bad
But give me the strength also to be able to overcome it”



“The Lord God Made Them All” Part 1

“O God, you have made us and all living things to form your family on earth. We thank you for giving us our pets who bring us joy. As you take care of us, we also ask that we might take care of those who trust us to look after them. By doing this, we share in your own love for all creation”.

Pic 1



Pic 2



Pic 3



Pic 4



We were asked to share with you this recent email conversation which apparently has some good ‘truths’ in – please take from it what you will and please do feel free to get in touch with us anytime.

The context was Elisabeth replying about a recent Bible Study session, on Isaiah.

Elisabeth Cole and Stuart Chandler

The conversation

“Thanks Stu, did some of Bible study, I like Isaiah, I have found that when Life's been hard, prophesies in Isaiah have cheered me and come true personally. I don't know what other people think, but it's helped me, I think words in the Bible are sometimes living truth, it's not just a history book.

Predictions that helped me we're a promise that I would be happily married and should enlarge my tent as my family would grow, at the time it seemed impossible as I was going through a painful divorce, but it all came true.

What I liked about yesterday's reading was

You shall go out with joy and the trees of the field shall clap their hands

It's one of our favourite songs, and has been playing in my head encouraging me that everything is going to be okay and we will be released from this lockdown

Elisabeth”

“Dear Elisabeth,

That's fabulous – thank you very much for your email and thought-provoking content. I love the insights and I do so agree with you – the more I read and study the bible, the more it becomes nourishment and a blessing. I think it is so much more than a historical document, as you say.

I've been reading the book of Malachi and am really encouraged that so many have found it hard to follow God consistently, yet through His grace and love, he calls us back to Him every time. We try to follow Jesus. Me – I fail. So, I try again. I fail again. I try again. So, the cycle continues. The grace and love of God saves me every time. We're all in this together. God is right with us. Right in the action, in the thick of it. Amen.

It's a bit like my (very potted) journey to fitness – I try, I fail, I try, I fail and so on. I feel quite sorry for my Personal Trainer/friend *"soon to not be such a great friend if I don't get my training in..."*

I have agreed to build his website and he to get me 'fighting' fit/lose weight etc.

Hmmm .. I wonder who got the better deal! No prizes – it wasn't him! Poor chap. Then comes my old adversary, accountability.

I blame the meds. "I was never this weight/size 20 years ago".

I blame genetics. "All the 'Chandlers' are big". "I have big-bones". Etc.

Heck, I blame anything - "I'm not fat, just short for my weight" and other related nonsense.

Does it help? Of course not. So, I step out, trainers on feet, into God's creation, fresh air in the lungs and grass (or currently snow) underfoot. Pedometer on wrist. All good. Off we go. Training sessions via Facebook Live as well. Zoom calls with Lee to 'check in/progress'. Thank you, Internet... I think!?

Will I be that lean, fit fighting machine or whatever the phrase is, that he stated at the beginning, when we all meet again at KURC one fine day?

Nope, probably not at all, but the journey is fabulous.

So, it goes on. Bit like this email. I guess as long as we keep *trying*, though, in all our silly attempts, God stays with us, regardless.

I do look forward to when we can meet and chat again at the KURC service and I can hear your guitar playing again at the 11.30.

It will happen. God has us. I'm not going to ramble anymore. Thank God for that, she says.

So, the cycle of life and the journey of faith continue and God's grace and love saves the day. Again.

Thank you, Elisabeth. Hope the rest of your week goes well.

Best wishes.

Stu



So Young's Mission Report

This below is an edited version of what So Young submitted to a recent Elder's meeting:



I cannot believe how this very challenging season has passed. I was full of concern and prayed that I would not lose God's people during this situation. However, fortunately I am writing the report updating my work, thanks to your loving support and prayers for me and my work. Until the end of the first lockdown situation, I tried my best to contact people by window visiting and filming and reading Bible stories. At that stage, Korean people had been gloomy and even

children felt unstable; some kids kept in touch with me day and night. Some children were doing nothing but playing video games all day long. Some children just ignored every contact from me and others. Even their parents lost their jobs and they were afraid of their daily life. I was praying and doing my best not to lose them in that period. Sometimes, I and Korean team baked and sold Korean Waffles in the street so as to have a chance of meeting kids face to face, and when children came with their parents, I spread the Gospel sheets quickly. And also, when other adults baked and sold Boong-Uh-Pang, I gathered children in the Church garden and shared Bible stories with dancing and games. With your prayers and my effort, fortunately, children and adults felt better than before. The first lockdown had finished and we were finally able to meet in the Church from September.

24 hours of prayer: the KURC has two sessions of 24 hours prayer in one year. This is my 4th 24 hours prayer time. The Kingston United Reformed Church offers this time to the Congregation to let them clearly focus on the will of the Holy Spirit. Even though we did not gather in the Church, we set up a live streaming system in the Church Sanctuary and shared our prayer and reflection through a Zoom service. I helped to host the session for 24 hours and it was really amazing to see many members joining in the Zoom and sharing their reflections without pausing for 24 hours. Especially, I was moved by our two Ministers' devoted passion and loving endless prayer for the future of our Church, the UK and the World. I have a faith that we are going to overcome this tough situation fluently together. I appreciate that KURC has such a wonderful God's people who are very sensitive to God's calling and warm heart like Jesus.

The Advent Calendar - I had been displaying the Advent Calendar with children's artwork on the New Malden United Reformed Church fence day by day. I started displaying from the 1st December and planned to finish at Christmas. Every dawn, I went to Church, displayed the new picture and prayed for the UK. And an interesting

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thing happened one day. I knew that the display might have a positive influence on the people passing by our Church because I intentionally started this work to give God's hope and show them that somebody is praying for them and that God is with them. Then, an anonymous person displayed his/her prayer on our Church fence on the 4 December! I was really moved and laminated the small picture so that it didn't get wet in the rain. I added one of the pictures and made it more beautiful. I hope our prayer gives that person hope and encouragement from God.



Loving Sheep dolls and Christingle – Thanks to KURC members, Sally and Ministers love, all the Korean children who received the sheep dolls are really pleased and happy now. Even some kids brought the sheep and show off those to classmates in my London Korean school online class. One of them clearly told all the classmates that Kingston United Reformed Church members had knitted for her and she was really proud of them and appreciated that.

And thanks to our KURC Ministers, youth workers and members' loving delivery service of the Christingle gift, Korean children was very happy and felt be loved and belonged to us. They really enjoyed the Christingle crafting time and Sally's leading, I appreciate all the KURC member's deeply for this Christmas' caring delivery service.

Thoughts and prayers – I have been working without rest during the COVID situation from March in 2020 because I know this is a really important time to reconstruct a new kind of Church system when people are filled with confusion. I think this 'new normal' will lead to a two-way system (off line and on line) for bringing people together in any field in the world. I think any meeting host must spend double the time and energy planning and opening two parallel systems (on and off line) and contacting people one by one. And new technology, like live streaming, will be required. The Church must not delay in developing this streaming quickly and carefully to meet the needs of people and fulfil the new normal. I hope God's Church will lead the world in the right way with God's word in this new stream. Please pray for me to stand firmly in this mission field without fatigue. Please pray for the improvement of my language and communication skills, and that I will blend into any group in the UK. I hope and pray that I will be able to carry on the bridging work through God's will, building up the right and great relationship with God's people.

Thank you for reading my report. God Bless you!

So Young

June Avery (1933 – 2021) – An appreciation



June died in hospital on 13th February, following a severe stroke. Many members of Kingston URC may not have known her well, so this is an appreciation (not an obituary), based on the June we knew here.

Rosemary Moore knew her from early days in the area, after June went to school in Twickenham, joined the Bank of England, and married Derek Avery, who worked at the Hawker factory in the Richmond Rd in Ham. She was always active and sporty, playing hockey into her late 60s and enjoying tennis, table tennis and athletics, especially with the Bank of England Sports Club in Roehampton, which has extensive sports and social facilities (and is now the home of the LTA National Tennis Centre).

June was a keen gardener – she and Derek managed a large allotment in Park Road, until his death in 2000 and she enjoyed the activities of the Kingston Horticultural Society. She continued to grow flowers and vegetables in her garden in Tudor Drive, and found real joy and company in the birds she fed in the garden – not to mention the fish she kept in an aquarium indoors.

I knew June best through the Dancing Group in the Mayo Hall. Soon after she joined KURC through Rosemary, she was responsible for finding our first Dancing teacher, Jeff Clark, back in 2006, when we had realised that the Mayo Hall has an ideal floor for ballroom dancing. From that point, she was a key figure in running the regular Friday afternoon group. A good dancer herself, she befriended the many people who came to dance and to learn, and she and I undertook the organisation and refreshments, so Jeff and his wife Debs – and later, Sally, sometime after Debs' sudden death - could concentrate on the teaching. Our role had a pastoral element, and we gave support to lots of dancers who passed through or remained. June was very friendly, and her jolly laugh could often be heard through the Hall. She loved to dress up for the Friday afternoons, and particularly for our quarterly Tea Dances.

When Jeff could no longer continue as Dance Teacher, he was followed by Linda Haynes, who took on the Group with gusto and made it a great place to dance and have fun! Again, June was supportive, made an excellent cup of tea for the interval, and enjoyed befriending our regular dancers.

June was also a good 'befriender' of individuals in the congregation, and enjoyed the social gathering after services. She usually joined the Zoom services, incognito, though she used to sing along, and joined the Breakout sessions 'live'. She will be much missed, I know. We wish our deepest condolences to June's sons John and David, and their families, whom she loved and talked about with great pride.

Liz Cook and Rosemary Moore

Voices of Hope

Many of you may know that in September I began an internship with Voices of Hope, a relatively new charity working with the community in Kingston, and I wanted to let you know a bit about what we do. Voices of Hope began in 2019 as a series of community choirs which aimed to build its members up, helping them to grow and feel valued and find their voice through singing together. Obviously at the moment we can't run any choirs (I can't wait to get them going!) but we have been running a whole ton of other projects to meet our aims including:

BRITE box - a healthy recipe kit with all the ingredients and an easy step-by-step recipe card sent to families who are receiving free school meals. Our aim is to bring families together around food in the home, to spark joy & interest in cooking and eating well. Also it provides children with key cooking skills & the self-confidence to use them whilst impacting the issue of child food hunger through fun, family activity. We now send out 280 boxes each week and it's an incredible project to be a part of.

Food HUB supplies cooked meals to those who can't manage to cook for themselves and are isolated with have no further support within the community. Having prepared and delivered approximately 28,000 meals since last March, we're now averaging 150-200 a week.

Active Breathing Course is a new, free 6-week Zoom programme designed for people who suffer with longer-term COVID symptoms and other respiratory conditions such as COPD, asthma and emphysema. The course involves fun and creative breathing exercises rooted in singing techniques to help restore lung function, lung capacity and improve abdominal muscle support. We are working closely with the SW London GP COVID response team who are responsible for the care of post-COVID patients in the community who helped us set criteria for referrals and will be informing GP practices that the course is available. They expect the take-up to be quite extensive as there have been a lot of requests to the team for a course such as this to support people's recovery but so far there has been nothing they could offer.

More info is available at www.voh.org/abc

Good Food Coop is an organic fruit and veg box delivered to your door! The funds raised from the service go to provide the same boxes at low costs to people referred to us through GPs and social prescribing who would otherwise struggle to afford fresh fruit and veg for their families. Please see the attached flyer for more info.

Sisterhood Sanctuary brings women, particularly those who have experienced domestic violence, abuse, or physical and mental illness, together in a safe space for free activities such as pamper sessions and creative art projects, purely as a way of saying "you are loved and you are valued as women". We are resuming our in-person sessions from April which is so exciting!!

Working with Voices of Hope so far has been wonderful – exciting, stressful at times, full of hilarious moments, incredible people and lots of fun. There is so much more I could say but to avoid taking over the entire issue do get in touch with me if you'd like to know more. If you'd like to support us in some way you can....

- sign up for the Good Food Coop (and get amazing veg out of it)
- visit www.voh.org.uk/abc to learn more about ABC; we are providing the course free of charge (though with a voluntary pay-it-forward scheme), so we

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desperately need the funds to make it happen. If you would like to donate, please follow the links on the web page.

- follow us on social media and share our posts – search @voh.org.uk on Facebook or @voh_org on Twitter/Instagram
- ask about volunteering with us – we have such a diverse range of roles available and we're a friendly bunch.
- pray for us – for the resources to run our projects, our staff and volunteers (who work insanely hard!) and for the amazing people who access our services

Rhiannon Bone (with some text lifted from Sarah Clay, VoH's director)



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“The Lord God Made Them All” Part 2

“Hear our humble prayer, O God, for our friends the animals, especially for animals who are suffering; for any that are hunted or lost or deserted or frightened or hungry; for all that must be put to sleep.

We entreat for them all

Thy mercy and pity, and for those who deal with them we ask a heart of compassion and gentle hands and kindly words.

Make us be true friends to animals and so to share the blessings of the merciful”.

Albert Schweitzer (1875 – 1965)

Pic 5



Pic 6



Pic 7



Pic 8

Korea and their COVID response

I was asked to share a bit more of our experiences in Korea, focusing particularly on the differences with the way they've handled the coronavirus.

You may remember the story of two friends talking and one asking the other if they know what the secret of good comedy was. Before the second person can finish saying “no, what is the secret of good comedy” the first person has said over the top of her “TIMING”!

Not a joke that works well on paper but for me TIMING has been the key difference.

In defence of the British Government, it wasn't only a matter of political will. Korea was badly affected by the SARS outbreak of 2002-2004. This led to them developing tools and procedures that were immediately usable when COVID-19 arrived. One of the key tools was a very effective contact tracing application. Having this ready to go enabled the Koreans to quickly find and follow up the contacts of everyone identified as infected. (The UK's track and trace was very late and fraught with problems.)

If you remember the news from early 2020, Korea often featured with pockets of infection arising, sometimes in the mega-churches there. (Incidentally, this gave a bad name to all churches even though those impacted tended to be the extremist cult like churches. When we were there many mainstream churches had signs up distancing themselves from these “Shincheonji” churches.)



The Koreans also quickly set up a very slick system for international travellers. On arrival we were marshalled in to an area where we had to install a quarantine monitoring app on our phones. We were then taken through immigration where they checked where we would be quarantining. Once we had our bags, we moved to the next holding area where people were divided up depending on which part of the country they were going to. Special COVID-secure buses then took us to the regional hubs from where smaller vehicles were waiting to take us for our first COVID-19 test and then to our quarantine address. Each morning and evening in quarantine we had to submit our temperature and any symptoms using the mobile app and we had regular calls from the monitoring team. Two weeks later, following a second COVID test we were released! (The UK has only recently introduced a similar scheme.)

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Once out of quarantine, like everyone, we had to wear masks wherever we went, outside as well as inside. This was bad news for me as a wearer of glasses as in the winter air it became a choice between peering through a fog or seeing everything blurred! (In the UK, although I noticed many more people wearing masks outside, it is not mandatory so I can at least see where I am going most of the time!)

Initially, everywhere was open and you just had to leave contact details with restaurants and museums but later in our stay the case numbers started to rise and museums were closed, cafés reverted to takeaway only and travel was restricted. But we could still eat out in groups of no more than four.

What amazes me is the contrast in the numbers of cases in Korea compared to the UK. I know the politicians say you can't compare countries as they all measure differently but when the numbers are orders of magnitude different it makes me wonder. As of 4 March, since the start of the pandemic, South Korea has recorded 91,240 confirmed case and had 1,619 people die. By contrast, at the peak, the UK was getting around 60,000 new cases and over 1,000 deaths every day.

It's not all bad though! The UK is way ahead with its vaccination program which is only just starting up in Korea.

Lessons will be learned I am sure and when the next pandemic hits, and the scientists assure us it will happen again, let's hope we are all better prepared and that like Korea and a good comedian, the UK gets the timing right.

Martyn Verge

Galanthus nivalis



“Snowdrops are the Tears of God”

Oscar Wilde (*The Happy Prince*)

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“It’s beginning to look a lot like Christmas”

I know we all complain about how Christmas on our High Streets starts earlier and earlier but how do we feel in March seeing our shops look like this? The Ghost of Christmas past? So, spare a thought and a prayer for our shops and for all those low paid, long hours workers who have been at best furloughed but probably like many in the retail sector been permanently let go. And when at some point they reopen let’s try and engage fully with our local shops and community rather than clicking on that Amazon order..... It’s good to talk.

The Editor



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Up the mountain



He turns to us at the foot of the mountain. Come with me Peter, James, John, I've something to show you. He looks at me, "you don't think I'll leave you behind?" He laughs. I smile, he never forgot me, even when off on his travels, his parting words always "love you".

We start up the stony path. I think of my sandals, I've already fixed them twice, hope they don't let me down now, got my water bottle okay. I look back, the rest of them lolling on the grass opening their picnics. I look forward, better catch up. "where are we off to now?" He leads the way, so eager. I remember as a child he was always ahead, I had to call him to wait for us. I always worried he'd get lost, fall of the mountain, but he laughed at my fears, invincible. "why do you worry so much?"

The muscles on the backs of my legs start to ache and I slow down. He notices, "puffed out already? you're not old yet". We carry on at a slower pace, up the hairpin tracks. I'm watching the ground, don't want to slip or trip on these stones. Mustn't fall. At the next bend we stop, sit on some rocks. A chance to see how far we've come, quite high up but not even half-way to the top. Does he really want to go all the way up? Can I make it?

He is bouncing on his feet anxious to get going. I leaver myself off the rock. Oh well here we go then. I try to catch him up, its always hardest if you're last in line. He notices and eases up a bit.

We stop again, take swigs from our water bottles. The view is quite something, above the scrubby trees now and we can see across the valley. I remember how he used to tease me, standing on the edge of the cliff, dropping a stone, it was seconds before we heard it land. I'd beg him not to stand so near the edge. He always did take risks, saw no danger.

On again..... and again. Yes, he really does mean to get to the top. He's bouncing ahead, "Come on you lot, thought you were fit!" We make a last spurt and catch up. I sit on the nearest rock, feel quite dizzy, panting. Deep breaths, head between the knees, feel light-headed now, look at the ground, try to get my breath back. "You okay? Look at that view, you can see for miles". I follow his gaze. We are higher than all the other hills. If it weren't for mist on the horizon we could see the sea. I smile, it was

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worth it, “its tremendous, awe inspiring”. I look at his face. He is smiling, he looks so happy, so peaceful, his eyes sparkle with joy. His face outshines any view, I feel flooded with love for him. I am hypnotised, the love and peace in his face, everything else is out of focus. He seems to be shining, glowing, even his grubby clothes are beautiful, shining white. What's going on? Am I hallucinating, the air must be thin up here. I look for the others, they are gawping, open mouthed. John is kneeling face to the earth. Peter stands frozen as if in shock. The wind blows and I shiver. Its cooling down. The clouds are racing across the sky. The view is obscured. The clouds cover the mountain top. I can hardly see my hands in front of my face. It's cold! A voice echoes my thoughts, “this is my son, in whom I am well pleased, listen to him”.

I look up there seem to be two more people, strangers, they shine like him , they are talking. Mattered fragments of conversation...” your destiny.....make for Jerusalem... this is how you will glorify your father... this is the only way you will save your people.....lay down your life.... you are innocent, God will give it back to you..... you will never die..... eternal life... ultimate love.” who are they? Am I dreaming? Did I pass out?

The clouds thin. He is sitting on a rock, hands clasped round his knees. He looks older than his 33 years, no longer the young, joyful man. He's lost in thought. His hair is wet from the clouds, curling round his ears. We're all shivering now. “Come on mate”, it's Peter, “let's get back, we'll all freeze up here”. Dear Peter, care and concern on his face, and something else, awe, respect? I'm glad he has such a friend. He can always be relied on, the strong sensible one. “My rock” Jesus calls him. I don't worry so much when I know he is with him. He would never abandon him. He'll make sure he doesn't do anything stupid. I look at John, the dreamer, he looks completely out of it. Did you see it too John? Was it real? Was I dreaming wide awake?

Elizabeth Cole

On the margins - Apple Pink & Cherry Blossom

Japanese-style blossoming tree circles will brighten up Britain's “greyest” cities under plans by ministers and the National Trust. Newcastle, Nottingham and Plymouth are among urban areas earmarked for mass tree-planting schemes, in order to emulate the Japanese *hanami* cherry blossom-viewing craze that attracts thousands of visitors to the country each Spring.

The site for the first blossom circle will be Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in Newham, the same borough as the temporary NHS Nightingale hospital in London. The orchard will be a commemorative space to reflect on the impact of COVID on the capital, remembering those who lost their lives and honour key workers.



A National Trust spokesman said: “They will only become more beautiful over time as the trees root themselves in their surroundings, and we hope, into people's lives.”

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Archive of the month

A Walk on the Wild Side - Peter Ashdown's London Walks



Picture: Peter's 29th walk in spring 2009 passed through St John's Garden, Regents Park.

In 2006, Peter Ashdown began leading monthly walks for church members and friends. The first was around Notting Hill. Ten years later, when Peter decided to retire, 106 walks had been completed covering every conceivable area of Greater London.

Each walk was meticulously planned to include plenty of historical and architectural interest, and then 'pre-walked' by Peter and Vaughan to check the availability of coffee and lunch stops. Peter kept a scrapbook recording every walk-in photos and maps, which he will be delighted to show anyone interested.

John Fisher

Searching the net



Sally Butler writes I was encouraged by Lesley and the youth team to let the church know about something called Ecosia. It is an environmentally-friendly, ethical alternative to search engines like Google. It is free to use and you can set it as your home page.

They plant trees when you search online and use the ad revenue to do so. They also never sell your private information to third parties. For more information about their ethics, please visit www.ecosia.org. Hope this is useful. I've used it for years and no problems!

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Unusual churches of the world

The Church of St Barbara, Bärnbach, Austria



A few years ago, I visited Vienna and went to view the extraordinary 'Hundertwasserhaus', now one of the principal tourist attractions in that city. This building ignores almost every architectural convention. Its architect, Friedrich Hundertwasser (1928-2000) was an eccentric artist who loathed straight lines and standardization and believed passionately that buildings should be colourful, playful and amusing. Did he design any churches? Yes, he did: this one in southern Austria.

It is actually an old church, remodelled in 1987 with Hundertwasser's usual imagination and vitality. The surroundings are an integral part of the design. The extensive churchyard has twelve gates which represent all the major religions of the world - a gesture of tolerance and ecumenism which echoes the decoration on the cross in our own sanctuary. Hundertwasser commissioned local artists to design many of the interior features, thus strengthening the bond between church and community.

John Fisher

Julian's Baptism



I was happy to become a member of Kingston URC on 24th December 2020 and I was Baptised on that day. This is my favourite passage in the Bible and inspires me daily: “Come to me all you who are weary and heavy-laden and I will give you rest,” (Matthew 11:28). I often feel weary and heavy laden, and the idea of a rest given to me by none other than Jesus himself makes me breathe a deep sigh of relief and gives me comfort. A yoke is a crossbar with two U-shaped pieces that encircle the necks of a pair of oxen or other animals working together. Or it can be one piece fitted to a single person carrying it across their shoulders with equal loads on each end, like two buckets of water. Jesus is inviting me to take off the single yoke I have put on my

shoulders, place it on the ground, and step in beside him on a two-harness yoke. The full verse reads: “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light,” (Matthew 11:29-30). I realise that what Jesus is asking me is not to take up yet one more burden, but to allow him to become yoked to me, so that he can walk beside me, accompany me with his presence and bear my burdens with me. And I realise, too, that Jesus has been doing this for me all along in the form of people who have accompanied me in a non-stressful, anxiety-reducing way. To take Christ’s yoke means to submit oneself to the authority of Christ. It means to put ourselves under his rule, to join together with him. By offering us his yoke, Christ is offering me the chance to bind myself to God. He comes to me, knowing all of the burdens of this life that I carry, and he says, “Come to me all you who labour and are burdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me.” Take my yoke upon you. Bind yourself to me and I will help you to carry your load. To take his yoke means sharing my life with Jesus. It means walking beside him in everything I do; sharing with him my burdens, my pains, my blessings and my joys. It means to me knowing that whatever particular load I carry on my shoulders, even when the weight of it seems too much to bear — especially when the weight seems too much to bear — Christ is there to help me carry it. My Baptism was the moment when I got it, the real meaning of Matthew 11:28, 29 at that moment I woke up and said to myself “I know what I was created for” I felt it is like initiation into this is what I am for, this is what I am here for, this is my life's purpose. This came together over a period of time; this is what I am here for, let go, surrender. I woke up to what this life is, what it’s all for. I needed to wake up, to be initiated, to be baptised. Through this I have had a deeper experience of God, a deeper experience of myself. To discover my soul - my deeper life purpose. To surrender to God’s, love and fully allow it to become the deepness of feeling and direction in my life.

Julian Le Fustec

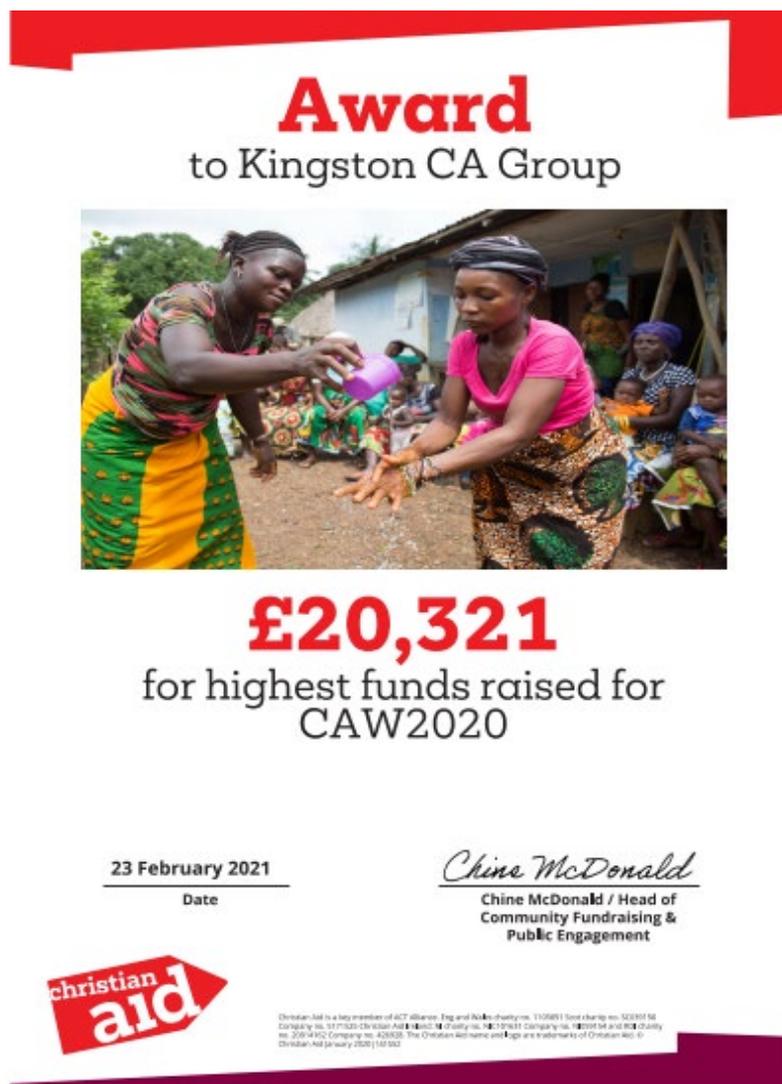
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Christian Aid Week 2020 AWARD

The Kingston Christian Aid Group was awarded a certificate for being **the Highest Fundraiser in the UK for Christian Aid Week (CAW) 2020**.

This recognizes all the efforts put in by the Christian Aid Committee, the walkers, the Quiz team (remember the stress!) and all our supporters last year, who donated so much of their time, effort, ingenuity and money.

Thanks



The Kingston Christian Aid group includes members from All Saints, St. Johns, Kingston Methodists, Society of Friends, St. Andrews, St. Luke's the URC.

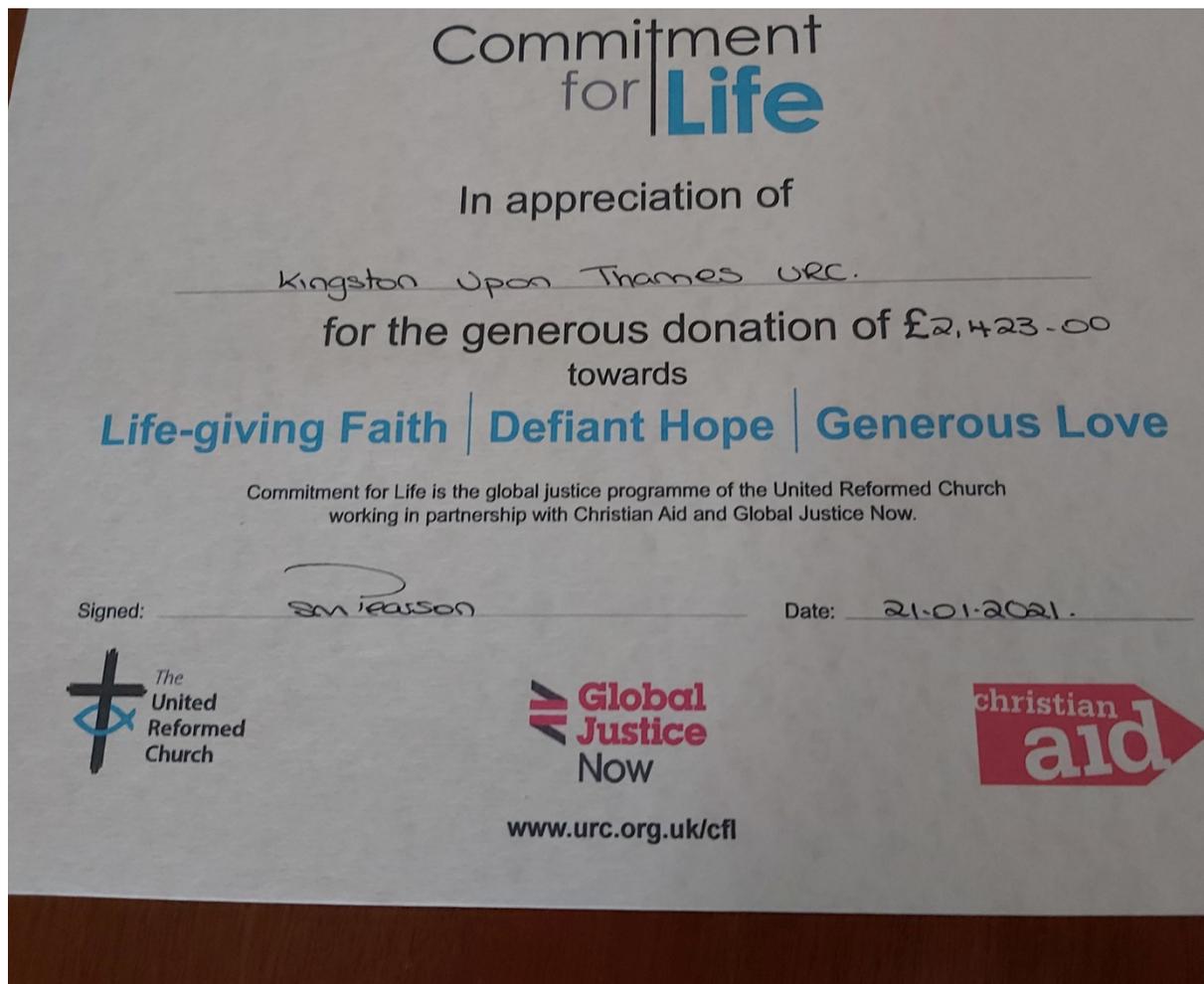
I attended the Christian Aid Changemakers Conference via Zoom last week and gathered quite a few ideas that will be shared soon.

I hope this makes you think of CAW 2021 (May) and how you may be able to support? If so, please contact me or Sue Watts or any other members of the CA Committee, with enthusiasm for another great year of support to Christian Aid.

Ray Charlton

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Commitment for Life



We have recently received acknowledgement of our congregation's donation of £2423.00 to Commitment for Life. Our continued support for the work of Christian Aid and Global Justice Now is greatly appreciated

I've attached a copy of the certificate; it says it all

Ray Erskine



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“The Lord God Made Them All” Who’s who?

In the flurry (or should it be furry) pics of Lesley's brothers Westie pups (see below) a “Pet's Corner” makes an appearance in the April issue of Church News Thank you to those who sent pictures of pets or those belonging to a family member, a neighbour or just someone who has and loves their pet!

Although the Westie pups would make a welcome addition to our home of two Corgis strangely, I've been over-ruled!

The Editor



Picture	Who's who?	Contributed by
Pic 1	Apollo is 2 and a half. He is a miniature black and silver schnauzer. He is sociable dog and likes walking in the woods. He lives cuddles with his human family.	Cathy Seymour
Pic 2	This is Mabel . She loves watching wildlife progs on TV!	Bron Robinson
Pic 3	Not so much pets but the hedgehog family that grace us with their presence every Summer!!	Janine Goddard
Pic 4	My dog's name is Bolt , a boy, and 10 years old. He likes to run, smell trees and worship.	Jihae Kim
Pic 5	This is young Sandy the hamster with his happy owner. Elliot requested a hamster to look after for his 8th birthday. They are getting used to each other. Elliot is Roger's grandson. (Elliot's dad gave permission to use this picture).	Cathy Seymour
Pic 6	Mickey , is my brother's rescue mongrel. He is about 9 years old - 70% angel, 30% monster.	Jean Thompson
Pic 7	Pablo is spoilt rotten, he adores his mommy and gets really grumpy if Kevin takes him away from me. Born in Cape Town South Africa, Pablo travelled at age 1 to live in the UK. He was one of the first pets to arrive in the UK without having to go through months of quarantine. Pablo is now 10. He hates anything with 4 legs or wings, so taking him for a walk is a nightmare! He loves to watch the Sunday services on zoom...especially the part when we take Communion! This 3.8kg chihuahua is our second child, we all love him to bits and couldn't imagine the house without him. For someone so tiny, his personality fills our hearts and every corner of our home.	Catherine Treweek
Pic 8	Mavis does like a jigsaw ...!	Bron Robinson



Readings for April 2021

<p>The Cost of Love Jesus is our exemplar of what it means to love God. This Holy Week, we consider Jesus' last days as part of our 'into the unknown' discipleship theme: that is, under the idea of the mystery and challenge of discipleship. Like the women at the cross in Mark's gospel, can we stay true to Jesus in our walk of discipleship?</p>		
Sunday 28 March (Palm Sunday)	Ps 118:1-2, 19-29	
Monday 29 March	Mark 14:53-65	
Tuesday 30 March	Mark 14:66-72	
Wednesday 31 March	Mark 15:1-15	
Thursday 1 April (Maundy Thursday)	Mark 15:16-20	
Friday 2 April (Good Friday)	Mark 15:21-39	
Saturday 3 April	Mark 15:40-47	
<p>The Bible through the seasons: Spring Spring is a time of new birth, and, in our Christian calendar, a time of resurrection. Our readings celebrate God doing new things.</p>		
Monday 5 April	Song 2:10-15	winter is past
Tuesday 6 April	Is 42:5-16	new things I now declare
Wednesday 7 April	Hosea 6:1-6	let us return
Thursday 8 April	John 3:1-15	born anew
Friday 9 April	1 Cor 15:12-28	Christ is first fruits
Saturday 10 April	1 Cor 15:35-50	an imperishable body
<p>Cosmonaut: First in Space This theme falls on the 60th anniversary of the 12 April 1961 space flight of Yuri Gagarin, the first human being in space and the first to orbit the Earth. The writers of the Bible could not have foreseen the technology enabling space travel, but they did imagine incredible human journeys. These readings begin with a vision of God in creation, then move on to Bible stories of human beings' travels into the beyond, and the promise of Jesus' return. It concludes with Ps 150, uniting heaven and earth in praise of God.</p>		
Sunday 11 April	Prov 8:22-31	God in creation
Monday 12 April	Ps 147:1-11	the star thrower
Tuesday 13 April	Gen 2:4b-9	the earthling
Wednesday 14 April	2 Kgs 2:1-14	Elijah's ascension
Thursday 15 April	Mark 9:1-9	the transfiguration
Friday 16 April	Acts 1:1-11	Jesus' ascension
Saturday 17 April	Ps 150	heaven & earth in harmony
<p>The Gospel of Mark (2): 1. Jesus the healer</p>		
Sunday 18 April	Mark 5:1-20	
Monday 19 April	Mark 5:21-34	
Tuesday 20 April	Mark 5:35-43	
Wednesday 21 April	Mark 7:24-30	
Thursday 22 April	Mark 7:31-37	
Friday 23 April	Mark 8:22-26	
Saturday 24 April	Mark 9:14-29	
<p>The Gospel of Mark (2): 2. Jesus the teacher</p>		
Sunday 25 April	Mark 6:1-13	
Monday 26 April	Mark 7:1-13	
Tuesday 27 April	Mark 7:14-23	
Wednesday 28 April	Mark 8:27-33	
Thursday 29 April	Mark 8:34-38	
Friday 30 April	Mark 9:30-41	
Saturday 1 May	Mark 9:42-50	

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

Ministers:

Rev Lesley M Charlton, tel: 020 8399 4423 e-mail: minister@kingstonurc.org

Rev Dr Suk In Lee, tel: 020 8949 2070 e-mail: leesukin@hotmail.com

Church Secretary:

Martyn Verge, mobile: 07801 979009 e-mail: chsec@kingstonurc.org

Treasurer:

Christine Chippendale, mobile: 07738 562457 e-mail: treasurer@kingstonurc.org

Children, Youth & Families Worker:

Sally Butler, mobile: 07807 348326 e-mail: youth@kingstonurc.org

Missionary:

So Young Jung, e-mail: 2005eo@naver.com

Mission Development Worker through Music:

Han Sol Kang, e-mail: hansolk524@gmail.com

PA to the Minister and Premises Manager:

Catherine Treweek Work Mobile: 07807 351801 (between 10 am – 4 pm only)

Premises Assistant:

Georgi Todorov

Tel: 020 8549 1888 e-mail: premises@urckingston.org.uk

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, 9th April. Editor: Bron Robinson

bronhr@googlemail.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 via our website at www.kingstonurc.org. You can also pay directly into our bank account: sort code 20-46-73, account number 60921289 and quote: "Kingston United Reformed Church Charity" as the recipient. 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** 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 also 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.

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