

The CHURCH NEWS United Reformed February 2024

Kingston United Reformed Church <u>www.kingstonurc.org</u>



Winter in Richmond Park

'There is a certain Slant of light, Winter afternoons.....'



(Emily Dickinson)

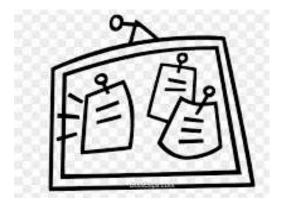
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Edited this month by Vaughan James

Worship and events diary: February 2024

The following is the anticipated diary for February as of mid-January. For subsequent updates and/or information on daily prayers, Bible Study and other Zoom sessions, please check emailed weekly notices or the events calendar on the KURC website: <u>https://www.kingstonurc.org/kurc_eventsnews.html</u>.

Sunday 4th Monday 5th Wednesday 7th Friday 9th	10.00 11.30 17.00 10.00 10.00	Worship & Communion – also live-streamed All Age Worship Reflective Service Jolly Toddlers Tots' Praise Copy deadline for March's Church News. Editor: Jean Thompson
Sunday 11th	10.30 11.30 17.00	Combined Worship - also live-streamed Church Meeting Reflective Service
Monday 5th	10.00	Jolly Toddlers
Wednesday 14th	10.00	
Saturday 17 th	14.00	Crafternoon
Sunday 18th	10.30 11.30	Worship - also live-streamed All Age Worship & Communion Reflective Service
Monday 5th	17.00 10.00	Jolly Toddlers
Wednesday 21st	10.00	Tots' Praise
Sunday 25th	10.30 11.30 17.00	Worship - also live-streamed All Age Worship Reflective Service
Monday 5th	10.00	Jolly Toddlers
Wednesday 28th	10.00	Tots' Praise



Letter from Lesley



Dear All,

At this time last year one of the ministers was suspended and the other holding on to her sanity by her fingertips. She was trying to hide from the congregation, thinking this would all be sorted quickly and we could get back to work. A year later Suk In has been cleared of the charges against him and Lesley's condition is moving back towards normal..... as if!

It has been a tough year.

The congregation need to know the Elders have been in a very difficult place. They knew something was going on. They knew they are the Trustees of the Church. They could be told no more detail than the congregation. We are in their debt.

The church found itself in the middle of a storm. Safeguarding investigation / international church politics / reputational abuse. All these figured.

Now we begin the clear up. Suk In has been through a terrible traumatic event.

For me what has been tough is not being able to be honest with people. We were not allowed to be. Apologies if you felt lied to, undermined or avoided. I have realised that honesty is vital in a church. Not rudeness but openness.

Now we are like people when a storm subsides. The wind has stopped blowing. The rain is no longer falling. However, there is debris to be cleared away. There are repairs to be made. For me the amazing thing is how well the church has managed during this time. Many people just focused on their key job of being God's people and serving God. Hurrah. Thanks be to God - not for this thing but for our ability to get though it together and to learn the lessons from it.

Where was God in it? Keeping us going: that's where.

Yours *Lesley*

Church Secretary Chat



Happy New Year to you all.

Have you tried the daily prayers yet? I find it useful as I tend to start the day listening to and reading about the news, which seldom has good news. For 30 mins, with a bible reading to support our thinking we move into a prayer time. It is good on so many levels. Helping to balance our thoughts and hopefully our actions. How marvellous that we can be at home and yet praying together.

There are so many ways that we can be together. Of course, Sunday's worship services, in the building, on zoom on YouTube, where you can catch up with the first service during the week. Spending time in the foyer, joining with the children's activities, sharing a meal together on Mondays. Picking up the phone for a chat, texting. All so important, especially for those of us who cannot get to the church building.

Let's remember that we are the people of the church, even when we are not in the building.

I look forward to seeing you somehow, someday, somewhere.

(prize for the person who can tell me who wrote the lyrics of the quote.)

Cathy Seymour

Pastoral News as of 12th January 2024

May Hope and Blessings accompany us as we journey with Jesus throughout 2024.

Prayer

Dear God, at the beginning of a new year, grant that we maintain our faith and hope in You. Assure us what we are already praying for is already accomplished in the name of Jesus. God of hope fill us with joy and peace in believing, so by the Holy Spirit we may abound in hope. Help us to not lose heart, even when we feel we are sinking in the depths of despair. Remind us that inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

Out of care for people's privacy,

names are not included

in the Pastoral News section of the

online Church News

Touch us, O Lord and fill us with your light and hope. Strengthen us when we are weak, love when we feel forgotten, courage when we are afraid, wisdom when we feel foolish, comfort when we are alone, hope when we feel rejected. May peace stay with us each new day, Lord we pray. Amen

Ann Macfarlane

Sally's Stories

I'd like to focus on last year's (sounds strange saying that!) Christingle!

For the last few years, we've held an online Christingle service at 4pm Christmas Eve. It's been popular and attracted some of our families who don't come along on Sundays. It has also attracted people from other parts of the UK and overseas. So it is a lovely way to be able to attend even if you are spending Christmas Eve with Grandparents or perhaps you live away from your Kingston family. It was especially appreciated during lockdown. The image of light coming from the candle into a dark world is pertinent. We always provide the materials needed to make the Christingle and we make them together at the same time. Fabric Land were interested to know what I was making with 'ALL THAT RED RIBBON' and Sainsbury's must surely wonder what happens to all their oranges in late December!!

This year we decided to have the service both in person and on Zoom. Using Janine's mobile phone, I was able to see and include the Zoomers. It was a well-attended service and the atmosphere was lovely. People of all ages attend, with or without children. The tone is informal, the symbolism significant. We sing Carols, we sing the Christingle Jingle. The latter teaches what all the different elements of the Christingle mean. We pray together. I am struck by the people who come for whom it is their only church attendance that year. Also, by how many families from Tots Praise etc who know about Christingle and have such find memories of it from childhood. It is a long-established tradition. It is appreciated by all.

Here are some photos (courtesy of So Young)

Sally Butler Children, Youth and Families Worker



In Loving Memory of

Elizabeth Mary Bartlett

"Liz"

16th November 1941 – 12th December 2023



A full biography of Liz will appear in the edition of *Church News* that coincides with the special service to celebrate her life that will be held in the spring.



Kingston Child Contact Centre

The Contact Centre now has a room on the first floor of KURC for Supervised Contact, in addition to Supported Contact in the Mayo Hall. I was introduced to Lisa Tolley to produce a bespoke piece of artwork for the new room.

The Centre wanted a modern representation that was inclusive and culturally diverse so that all families, especially the children, could see themselves in everyday life activities. Importantly, they wanted this work to act as a talking point for families to initiate conversations, especially after a long period of absence.



Lisa has captured Kingston's historical buildings, including KURC, alongside other Kingston area landmarks - the rainbow pedestrian crossing, urban foxes, deers and so much more! The artwork is very engaging and shows who the Centre is today, with a sense of belonging that comes from families and communities working together.

Lisa's work is both a testament and tribute to the hard work of all the volunteers, the church and families past and present, where the Centre has made a difference to the many lives they serve. The Centre sees through a child's eyes,

and Lisa's work expresses this so aptly. (See link https://www.lisatolley.co.uk/)

Charmaine Lee, Centre Manager

(Photo – Charmaine left, Lisa right)

Flower rota for February

Sunday 4 February	Will Bryan
Sunday 11 February	Still available

Sunday 18 February Still available

Sunday 25 February



Reminder: Copy for the next (March) edition of *Church News* should reach Jean Thompson by **Friday 9 February.**

Jean Thompson

Jesus is our Neighbour a prayer from



Loving God, in every aspect of our lives, the places we live and work, laugh and play, learn and grow, you are there, guiding and nurturing us in your ways of love, peace and justice. If that goes for us, it goes for everyone else as well. Sometimes, it's easy to find you. A warm handshake from a stranger, a meal served by a friend or a hug from a loved one are all signs that you are alive and active amongst us. At other times, though, we find it hard to recognise you in others. They may not look like we look, think like we think, live like we live or worship as we worship, and yet, whether we can sense you or not, you are there, working through them.

Help us to recognise that, in the same way you live in us, so you live in all our neighbours: those whom we know and those we do not, those whom we relate to and those we do not, those whom we like, and those we do not. May we always look for you, and find you, in everyone, friend, stranger or otherwise.

In your precious name, Amen

Helpful information from Catherine

With this being the start of a new year, now seems like a good time to remind everyone about the hours our building is staffed and open, the roles and working hours of the premises staff and the best way to make contact with us.

My role is shared between my duties as Lesley's Personal Assistant and my role as the Centre Manager for the Richard Mayo Centre. So that I can do my job effectively and as much as I enjoy my job, I am not the church administrator or a postman/courier service; a gift or parcel holder, poster maker, personal shopper or available 24/7 to respond to questions ©

I have a work mobile that I am contactable on Monday to Friday 8am – 2pm. This number is 07807351801. I have two email addresses:

premises@urckingston.org.uk : To be used for any hall hire queries and building related matters.

kingstonurc@gmail.com: This is to be used for anything related to Sunday church, church activities and Lesley.

These emails are responded to Monday to Friday between 8am – 2pm.

The building is mostly open between 8am – 5pm Monday to Saturday. There are occasions that we may close at 2pm on a Saturday. We are not open on bank holidays, other than Christmas day.

Georgi, our cleaner and premises assistant works Tuesday – Saturday 8am to 5pm, except for the 2nd Saturday of each month, when a paid steward is in the building.

The foyer closes at 4pm each day to allow staff to do cleaning and arrangements for the following day.

On Sunday's and when staff are not working the building is the responsibility of the Elders.

PLEASE NOTE! Sally is not available on Fridays and Saturdays. (She does work the 3rd Saturday of the month so will then take Thursday off in lieu that week). It's complicated!! But her phone will be off on those non-working days.

If you do have any confidential questions regarding the staff, these can be directed to our management group: <u>managementgroup@kingstonurc.org</u>.

I hope this has been helpful and I look forward to seeing you in our foyer for coffee or tea (coffee servery is open Monday to Saturday 11am – 2pm).

Catherine Treweek

KURC New Year's Day walk

Around 15 members and friends enjoyed a somewhat muddy New Year's Day walk in Home Park and along the Thames towpath. Thankfully the rain held off. Following the walk we had a meal together at Eleana's cafe in Hampton Wick.

New Year's Day walkers reach Hampton Court.....

.....and relax nearby over lunch

John Fisher

From bird watching to writing about or drawing something that

Make 'enjoying nature' your priority.

inspires you in nature, growing your own fruit or vegetables, or exploring an area of outstanding natural beauty in the UK, be sure to fall in love with nature in a new way this coming year and allow it to lead your thoughts towards God our Creator. Further ideas can be found at arocha.org.uk/ideas-to-enjoy-nature

Eco Tip for the New Year

This is taken from A Rocha's calendar of monthly eco tips which you can download at https://arocha.org.uk/easy-eco-tips-2024-calendar/









KURC's road to Christmas....

.....with Christmas greenery.....

....with Christingle (see Sally's Stories on page 6)....

.....with Christmas music.....



Carols –

- in the foyer, and
- by candlelight





.....with a baptism.....

.....with a nativity play.....



.....and, of course, on the day itself and after two services, with a Community Christmas Day Lunch



News from Ga Young

The end of last year was a special season for me, when God sent me an angel from Korea. It was a period when personally I was feeling very weak. But through this angel, I gained a lot of encouragement and comfort. The angel was Ga-Young who, some 10 years ago as an 11-year-old girl, had been learning the Bible story from me in Sun Mok Presbyterian Church in Korea. As time went by, she reached her twenties and came to London from Korea as a university exchange student. She supported our youth work, including Messy Church, Junior Sunday School, the Youth Café, and the Sunday Afternoon Youth Activities. She dedicated herself volunteering from the early morning till the late evening every Sunday. Now, she had to return to Korea but she really did not want to leave the UK. Below is her goodbye card to us. Thank you all who welcomed her and thanks to God for giving her to us.

So Young Jung



Thank you so much, URC family and friends.

Hello, my name is Ga Young, and I was privileged to have supported the youth work in Kingston and New Malden URC.

I am quite shy and introverted, so I was not eavily approachable, but I wanted to share my feelings through this card. I always felt warnth and friendliness from all of you whenever I come to church. I never felt like a stranger due to your warm welcome. Solly, now I had to urgently return to Korea, so I couldn't greet each of you, but I really wish you know how much I appreciate you.

Even though I came as an exchange student and learned a lot academically from the university. the memories of volunteering and becoming a part of the UPC family have more meaning to me. Learning through your practice of God's love in your daily lives was like experiencing subtle scented candles. I believe my faith in Christianity has deepened! It was an incredibly valuable experience for me and an unforgettable warm memory.

When I become a worker as part of an international institutions someday, as a Christian, I think I will cherich and faithfully engage in God's work based on the lessons I gained from VRC. I sincerely appreciate the love and are you've shown. Glory to God !!

Sincerely. Gia Young

To make a financial donation to Kingston URC, please see the final page

Archive of the Month Our picture this month s



Our picture this month shows the Rev John Onley, who was minister of our church for 25 years at the end of the 19th century. He was apparently a very large man with a personality to match. He took charge of every church activity and led from the front: during his ministry there are very few instances recorded in the church meeting minutes of proposals or interventions by church members, and a good part of every meeting consisted of announcements and exhortations by the Pastor. He even presented and explained the financial reports.

John Fisher

Winter weather in Surbiton



With thanks to Sally Blandford for these atmospheric seasonal shots recorded on her camera over the years.

Caption competition



As readers will know, KURC has always been eager to foster youthful new talent among members of its congregation. This photograph taken in the church kitchen illustrates how the principle is being put into practice.

Can you provide a suitable (and preferably publishable) caption, please?

Entries by Sunday 4 February to <u>churchnews@kingstonurc.org</u>



Ecumenical prayer vigil outside Parliament, first 10 days of Lent (14 – 24 February)

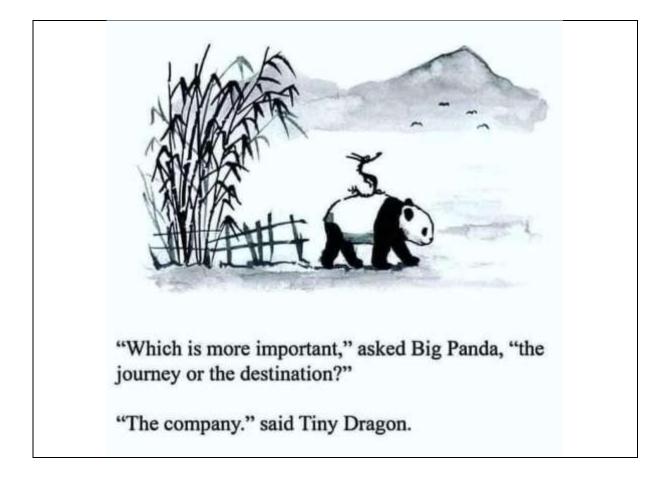
Churches together in South London have circulated the following details

Christians from across the country will gather from Ash Wednesday for ten days, day and night, for the **No Faith in Fossil Fuels** Lent Vigil. Street services are planned for the first day, Ash Wednesday, 14th February at 2:30pm, and the last day, Saturday 24th February at 3pm.

The vigil is an opportunity for Christians to stand together, pray and be more visible and vocal in the public sphere about the plight of our neighbour and all of creation in the context of the climate crisis.

The vigil is being organised by a coalition of Christian interests: Green Christian, Christian Climate, Action, Operation Noah, Salvation Army, A Rocha, Christian Aid, Tearfund and CAFOD.

More details: <u>https://christianclimateaction.org/.../join-us-for-the.../</u>.





More GOOD News - from Ray Charlton

Christian Aid

I am very pleased to report that the Kingston URC Alternative Christmas Card has raised over £1,000 for Christian Aid. Exact sums will be reported next month when GA amount is confirmed.

Thank you to all who contributed to this, to help in Christian Aid's Christmas Appeal for their work in enabling women to shine, to start and run their own business and get out of poverty. More details are here Christmas Appeal 2023 | Christian Aid

In addition the above. Some from the URC joined others from our Christian Aid group of supporting churches and sang carols in the centre of Kingston on 13th December. It was a cold evening but we collectively made a joyful sound in the town and raised £156.

Kitchen Upgrade Project

Bron and I were successful when we applied to Kingston Council for a grant to upgrade the kitchen. It is not a large sum but will cover most costs associated with replacing the benches and drawer/cupboard fronts in phase 1 of the works. In Phase 2 we hope to replace the large dishwasher and a few other items and will try to solve the issue with waste water drainage, which periodically blocks up causing the kitchen to be closed until the blockage can be removed. We will investigate other avenues for funding the required piping changes. The first work are hoped to be completed by early March 2024.

We were successful in getting this money, which comes via the Dept. for Education as we run Simply Healthy Cookery Classes in support of an initiative run by KVA. Encouraging people to cook from scratch, with fresh ingredients, preparing low cost healthy food with minimal food waste. WE are planning to start our 5th course on the 27th February 2024, with the class already over subscribed.

CAN YOU HELP? - I am looking for enthusiastic cooks, to volunteer to help me deliver this course. The course is established. When it starts, we run it every Tuesday for approx. 8 weeks and each session runs from 4-7 pm. If you are interested, please speak to me. You will find you meet people who are keen to learn and the whole experience is rewarding.

Child Action Lanka – CAL

I am heading off to volunteer again and very much looking forward to it. I have been given a number of laptops, drills, a jigsaw and nearly 20 mobile phones. In addition, I have received over £300 cash for which the donors have given me permission to spend it where I think it will make a difference. Thank you so much for your generosity. I shall be sending photos, via the church's WhatsApp, with short description so you can follow my volunteering and see what I and other volunteers get up to.

Best wishes,

Ray Charlton





Believing in Young People

Oxygen is a well established local youth work charity set up by local young people and supported by local churches. All of Oxygen's projects seek to empower young people to develop to their full mental, physical, emotional and spiritual capacities and enable them to realise their potential.

Youth Crime and Safety Survey

Oxygen has been asked by Achieving for Children to gather feedback from young people who have been affected by crime in the local area. Young people have helped Oxygen construct a survey which will explore their experience of any engagement with the police and the youth justice system. It will also look at ways to tackle offending, reduce crime and improve safety in the borough more effectively.

Young people can fill in the survey via a link on Oxygen's website.



Oxygen CEO, John Trend, a young person and one of Oxygen's youth workers participated in a conversation on knife crime on BBC London News. John talked

about **What's the Point?** Oxygen's knife crime prevention programme. This empowers young people to educate their community about knife crime and be part of the solution.

Click this link to watch BBC London video

Oxygen Shop (117 High Street, New Malden, opening hours: Monday closed; Tuesday-Saturday 10am - 5pm) raises funds for Oxygen, engages with local supporters and provides a place for young people and adults to volunteer. New volunteers and donations to Oxygen always welcome.

For more information contact Teresa James or

Oxygen direct, St. Peter's Hall, London Road, Kingston upon Thames, KT2 6QL Phone: 0208 547 0566; email: <u>info@oxygen-online.org</u>

ALSO.....



Kingston Street Pastors was set up as an Oxygen project almost 10 years ago by Oxygen trustees in partnership with local churches. It has helped thousands of adults and young people, many vulnerable, some suffering from homelessness, addiction

and mental health issues.

Our very own Sue Shaw has returned to her old role with Oxygen as Deputy Street Pastors Coordinator, to help out temporarily while Oxygen are in an interim



Commitment for life offer prayer and images for services of worship, church magazines etc to encourage and guide prayer for global justice.

Jesus is our Neighbour,

by Simon Peters former *Walking the Way* Project Manager

Loving God, in every aspect of our lives, the places we live and work, laugh and play, learn and grow, you are there, guiding and nurturing us in your ways of love, peace and justice. If that goes for us, it goes for everyone else as well. Sometimes, it's easy to find you. A warm handshake from a stranger, a meal served by a friend or a hug from a loved one are all signs that you are alive and active amongst us. At other times, though, we find it hard to recognise you in others. They may not look like we look, think like we think, live like we live or worship as we worship, and yet, whether we can sense you or not, you are there, working through them.

Help us to recognise that, in the same way you live in us, so you live in all our neighbours: those whom we know and those we do not, those whom we relate to and those we do not, those whom we like, and those we do not. May we always look for you, and find you, in everyone, friend, stranger or otherwise. In Your Precious Name,

Amen

From the Great Wall of China to the Berlin Wall.....

Thank you to Natasha for the article below which was shared with her by David Le of New Malden URC.

History has it that when the ancient Chinese decided to live in peace, they made the Great Wall of China; they thought no one could climb it due to its height. During the first 100 years of its existence, the Chinese were invaded thrice and every time, the hordes of enemy infantry had no need of penetrating or climbing over the wall, because each time, they bribed the guards and came through the doors.

The Chinese built the wall, but forgot the character - building of the wallguards. Though the Great Wall has over the years become a powerful symbol of the country's enduring strength and spirit, but it has actually been a good reminder to the Chinese of the superiority of human character.

The Chinese realised much later that the best defence against the enemy is not a fortified wall, but a fortified character. Thus, the building of human character comes before building of anything else.

William Shakespeare captured it succinctly when he said: "The fault is not in our stars, but in ourselves".

Peter Schutz, the former chief executive officer of Porsche said: "HIRE CHARACTER; TRAIN SKILLS".

Lastly, back in the days when Germany was divided, a huge wall separated East and West Berlin.

One day, some people in East Berlin took a truck-load of garbage and dumped it on the West Berlin side. The people of West Berlin could have done the same thing, but they didn't. Instead they took a truck-load of canned goods, bread, milk and other provisions, and neatly stacked it on the East Berlin side. On top of this stack they placed the sign:

"EACH GIVES WHAT HE HAS".

How very true! You can only give what you have.

What do you have inside of you?

- Is it hate or love?
- Violence or peace?
- Death or life?
- Capacity to build or capacity to destroy?

What have you acquired over the years?

- Team spirit or pull down architecture ?

"EACH GIVES WHAT HE HAS".

WBRA readings for February

CALLING

• Biblical figures are called

Thursday 1 February Jonah 3:1-6 Friday 2 February Jeremiah 1:4-10 Saturday 3 February Matthew 4:18-22

• God calls us

Sunday 4 February Romans 1:1-6 Monday 5 February Acts 13:1-5 Tuesday 6 February Galatians 5:22-26 Wednesday 7 February Matthew 11:25-30 Thursday 8 February Isaiah 45:22-25 Friday 9 February 1 Peter 2:18-21 Saturday 10 February Ephesians 1:15-23 Sunday 11 February 1 Peter 2:4-5 Monday 12 February Hebrews 3:1-6 Tuesday 13 February Ephesians 4:1-6

BIG STORY: BIBLE FRAMEWORK (1)

Wednesday 14 February (Ash Wednesday) Genesis 2:1-17 Thursday 15 February 1 Corinthians 13:1-7 Friday 16 February Genesis 3:1-13 Saturday 17 February Genesis 3:14-24

BIG STORY: BIBLE FRAMEWORK (2)

Sunday 18 February Genesis 7:17-24 Monday 19 February Genesis 11:1-8 Tuesday 20 February 1 Corinthians 13:8-13 Wednesday 21 February Genesis 11:27-32 Thursday 22 February Exodus 24:9-18 Friday 23 February 1 Samuel 8:4-20 Saturday 24 February 1 Kings 10:1-13

BIG STORY: BIBLE FRAMEWORK (3)

Sunday 25 February 2 Chronicles 36:11-20 Monday 26 February Psalm 126:1-6 Tuesday 27 February John 1:1-14 Wednesday 28 February John 20:11-18 Thursday 29 February Acts 2:14-21



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:

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Premises Manager and PA to the Minister:

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Work Mobile: 07807 351801 (between 8 am – 2 pm only) e-mail (Premises Manager): <u>premises@urckingston.org.uk</u> e-mail (PA to Minister): <u>kingstonurc@gmail.com</u>

Premises Assistant:

Georgi Todorov, Landline as above.

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 for March is Friday, 9 February 2024** Editor: Jean Thompson, e-mail: jeant@btinternet.com

FINANCIAL DONATIONS to KURC can be made in a number of ways:

Complete one of the forms at the back of the church to set up standing order payments. Make regular cash gifts at the Sunday services. By using the offertory envelopes, you allow the church to reclaim Gift Aid.

You can also pay directly into our bank account: sort code 20-46-73, account number 60921289 and quote Kingston United Reformed Church Charity. We also now have a digital collection plate (card reader) at the back of the church

We also now have a digital collection plate (card reader) at the back of the church

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 also keep in touch with worship and activities at our church through our website: <u>www.kingstonurc.org</u>. You can also follow us on Facebook and X.