CHURCH NEWS
June 2025

Kingston United Reformed Church
www.kingstonurc.org

(Recently discovered dinosaur in Richmond Park)

"All things bright and beautiful;
All creatures great and small."

A ROCHA UK BRONZE AWARD WINNER 2023 ECO CHURCH learn more

Registered charity no 1131880

Edited this month by Vaughan James

A warm invitation is given to all who read this magazine to come and share in our services and activities, both in the building and on Zoom

Our Sunday Services:
10.00 – Worship – also live-streamed (with Communion first Sunday monthly)

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

17.00 – Reflective Worship (with Communion on the third Sunday monthly)

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

Tea and Coffee are served between the 10.00 and 11.30 services and before the 10.30 service on the second Sunday

During the 10.00, 10.30 and 11.30 services there are **group activities for children** of all ages.

Weekly:

Monday:
10.00 Jolly Toddlers (except Bank Holidays)
10.00 Prayers on Zoom
12.30 Community Lunch (except Bank Holidays)

Tuesday:
10.00 Prayers on Zoom
10.30 Knitting & Crocheting (1st & 3rd Tuesdays monthly)

Wednesday:
10.00 Tots' Praise
10.00 Prayers on Zoom
13.30 Lunch-time Service

Thursday:
10.00 Prayers on Zoom
20.00 The Thursday Club on Zoom

Friday:
10.00 Prayers on Zoom

Saturday:
10.00 Prayers on Zoom

Monthly:
1st Tuesday 19.30 Elders' Meeting
3rd Saturday 09.00 Women's Breakfast
2nd Sunday 11.30 Church Meeting

Quarterly:
3rd Saturday 14.00 Crafternoons

School Holidays:
Wednesdays 11.00 The Generation Zone

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

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

A Problem or Concern? There is sometimes a listener available in the Foyer; if not, please speak to the coffee server or contact Lesley Charlton.

Events to look out for in June 2025

4 June, 18.30 – Prayer for Kingston (Kingsgate Church)
12 June, 12.30 – Lunchtime recital (Elia Stavrou, piano)
14 June, 14.00 – Voices of Hope, afternoon tea
21 June, 10.30 – Women's coffee morning

Please also see the e-mailed Weekly Notices.

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

Letter from Lesley

Dear All,

You walk into the kitchen and you know something is going on. What? To begin with you can't remember. And by the time you do remember it may be too late. You have been nipped and punched for the first of the month.

The next thing that happens is that we look round to see who is not there and plot how we will get them. That usually means we will listen to hear Ray get up and come down stairs and ambush him as he comes in.

Yes you are right it is ridiculous. Imagine teaching a young woman from the Ukraine about such a violent act. Imagine teaching a woman who has had to flee her country how to assault someone.

Sorry if you feel that way. For us it is a bit of light-hearted nonsense.

Light-hearted nonsense is very important.

Laughter. Beauty. Conversation

Jokes.

Kind acts. Being playful together.

All these matter. They do not have to be big, or expensive or earth shattering.

It is reaching out. It is the positive comment on the bus or laughing with a stranger.

It is building community and showing love.

These things do not take away the reality of cruelty or death or the brutality of war.

But they do mean that there is some point to having peace.

Imagine a peace where no one laughed. Would that be peace?

Mmm

Lesley

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Cathy's conversation

It may sometimes seem slow, but changes are happening. We have a commitment to improve the building of our church. It is a big project and there are many hoops to go through before we can visibly see and make good use of the improvements.

We now have the money ready and an interested company to get new windows and roof. Alleluia

The annual election process has concluded, and new elders have attended their first meeting. There has been a reshuffling of the responsibilities that each elder takes a lead on your behalf. Get to know them, they want to hear your views on church matters that interest you. At each elders meeting they will have time to bring matters to the elders, who will reflect on them, and report to the church meeting.

Church Secretary – Cathy Seymour
Youth – Rosette Oming Bali
Pastoral - Ann Macfarlane
Safeguarding - Sharon Henriquez Vernon
Management – Janine Goddard & Aby Grillo
Community – Carol Clack & Julian LeFustec (Interfaith)
Worship – Sue Shaw
Catering and social – Ray Erskine
Faith Advancement - Maddie Anlezark
Communication – Paohan Chen

Let's give thanks for the good things that change can bring.

God, grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things we can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Amen

Cathy Seymour

Pastoral News as of 18 May 2025

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

Prayer

Loving God, we pray for healing, comfort and strength in our lives. Remove the burden of grief, pain and sadness. Help us push through barriers that impinge on self and wellbeing.

Help us to face each new day with determination to change our thinking to happy times and remembrance of shared experiences. Lord, we know that time can be the great healer but all our joy in relationships can dim before the light can become brighter. Whether in death, surgery or other events we can be angry with you God, and then we see the agony you went through before a greater light encompassed the earth. Guide us and keep us in your everlasting love. Amen

Ann Macfarlane

Sally's stories

On Good Friday, we had 25 guests (adults and children) plus 6 volunteers at our Messy Easter event. We explored the final days of Jesus and then His resurrection.
Activities included: 'I am the Way' maze (pictured), making erupting flour paint pictures, prayer jars, washing dolls feet, Hot Cross Pizzas (now a tradition), making peace planes and a Helping Hand collage (now on display in the church).
John Campbell had written some songs for the celebration time. One of them was to the tune of 'Ten Green Bottles' and relived each day of Holy Week. Sally had hidden some visual aids in a big box, representing each day. After she had talked about each one, we sang the next verse of the hymn. Adults and children seemed to really engage with this.
We then rehearsed the action play ready for Easter Sunday and had our usual Easter egg hunt!

Sally Butler
Children, Youth & Families Worker

Messy Easter event

Lyrics to song….

Sunday, Jesus rode into the town,
crowds were cheering; joy was all around.
For a giddy moment, it seemed he would astound;
Jesus, keep on riding ‘til the lost are found.

Monday, Jesus, had to get more tough,
temple traders made the temple rough;
so he just exploded – ‘cos he had had enough.
Jesus, keep upsetting ‘til we see your worth.

Tuesday, Jesus preached for all to hear;
challenged power, showed no trace of fear,
so they planned to kill him, to stamp out his career.
Jesus, keep on preaching, preaching loud and clear.

Wedn’sday, Jesus taught his closest friends
how they’d share the Spirit he would send,
and although they’d fail him, he’d help them make amends.
Jesus, keep on teaching all who are your friends.

Thursday, Jesus, waited and delayed;
shared Passover, then in darkness prayed.
‘til the kiss of Judas meant he was now betrayed.
Jesus, grant us daily faith like you displayed.

Friday, Jesus hung there crucified,
his accusers won because they lied,
yet he cried ‘forgive them!’ before, at last, he died.
Jesus, keep forgiving, call us to your side.

Next day, nothing; such an empty day;
no more Jesus; nothing left to say,
but within its silence new hope was underway.
Jesus, keep us hoping, daily help us pray.

Sunday, Jesus came to life again,
greeting friends who’d left and caused him pain,
and with death defeated, God’s love was set to reign.
Living Jesus, bring us back to life again!

John Campbell © 2016 Kevin Mayhew Ltd. available via CCLI

Flower rota for June

Sunday 1 June	Ken Bartlett
Sunday 8 June	Connie Sheow
Sunday 15 June	Ann Macfarlane
Sunday 22 June	Helen Akao
Sunday 29 June	***Still available***

Commitment for Life

Life-giving Faith | Defiant Hope | Generous Love

christian aid

Commitment for Life prayer for Christian Aid

God of the oppressed, let justice flow like a river.
God of compassion, let dignity be extended to those who suffer.
God of the marginalised, let those living with discrimination come to know equality.
God of comfort, may every heart know your love and grace.

We pray that your purposes for Christian Aid would be accomplished. May those caught in the grip of poverty and injustice be met with dignity, equality, justice and love.

Strengthen and guide Christian Aid, its partners and sponsoring churches in all their work. Give them wisdom, perseverance for the task at hand, and a heart of compassion for all that they work with. Empower them by your Spirit to bring your hope to this world that you love. *Amen.*

Jonathan Clarke

Farewell to Sheila

At the end of a year in this country, spent in Kingston, Sheila Sousa, her husband and their two children are returning home to their native Brazil at the end of May. Sheila was an active member of KURC's congregation, founding with Sally the *Marys & Marthas* Women's group which meets monthly at KURC on a Saturday morning,

In her parting words of thanks to KURC at the group's May meeting, Sheila reflected on Britain's Christian heritage, especially as represented by some of the key *John*s who were active in its development:

> *This brave England, together with the other countries of the United Kingdom, brings together beautiful biographies of men and women of God, who made and continue to make history with their precious legacy in Defence of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is a Land of many martyrs and Johns (John Wesley, John Bunyan, John Charles Ryle, John Owen, John Knox...) who resisted faithfully, not negotiating the truths of the Gospel and proclaiming the Word of God with much Grace and fervour, being Salt and Light for so many other Nations.*

To these names she added Lesley's and Sally's in particular as sources of inspiration and support. Her farewell to KURC finished with a prayer:

> *Lord God and our glorious Father, we place our lives in your hands. Teach us to do your will and may your kind Spirit guide us on level ground. Open our hearts and eyes to the truths of your word. Help us to know you more and more, increasing our faith and using us as your instruments to proclaim your gospel faithfully.*

Storms and Wurlitzers

The architect H G Ibberson who designed and carved the unusual wooden cross in our sanctuary over a century ago also tried his hand at designing stained glass windows. I discovered that one example of his work has survived in the Congregational church at Beer, a seaside fishing village in east Devon. On a recent holiday in the area I went to have a look and was able to take this photo. The subject is, of course, Jesus calming the storm on the Sea of Galilee, an event described in the gospels of Mark (4 v40), Matthew (8 v26) and Luke (8 v25). At the time the window was installed many of the congregation would have been involved in the hazardous occupation of fishing at sea, and Mr Ibberson's choice of subject had special relevance.

There is something else interesting to see inside this church: the focal point is a Wurlitzer cinema organ - apparently the oldest one in Britain! It is used to accompany the hymns, and regular recitals are given on it. Having been installed in the Walsall Picture House in 1925, it eventually found its way to Beer via various owners. The church regarded its percussion and 'toy counter' stops as 'not quite suitable' for worship, and they were removed. But by 2008 tastes had changed and money was raised to replace the missing novelty sound effects!

John Fisher

Reminder:
Copy for the next (July) edition of
Church News should reach Catherine Treweek by
Friday 13 June.

Get up and go!

On awakening the sun was shining and the forecast promised a warm day; no wind and no rainfall. The decision was made to go to Brighton. The aim was to see, smell and hear rolling waves lapping gently on the seashore.

Was the lift working at Surbiton Station? I hadn't booked as was recommended so would I get the support required to get on and off the trains? There were now three train changes each way. At each stop I was met by a porter with a ramp. Unbelievable!

On reaching Brighton, the way to the sea front was much longer than expected. Half way down the street was St. Paul's Church. It was open and inside was a joy. Plaques depicted the Stations of the Cross carved in wood and so atmospheric.

Although populated with hundreds of families, 'diamonds' sparkled on the sea.

There was time to look around and a quiet place was found to meditate and pray. Despite the long journey home accompanied with hot, tired, fractious children, nothing could detract from a truly joyful experience. Every day brings new experiences and with a long bucket list, it's great to take opportunities and to feel blessed. God works in wonderful ways.

Ann Macfarlane ***OBE***

Coming out the closet

I never looked all that male to begin with, and I always felt easier with female friends. This might be down to the boys in playground always being rough, or sporty - two things I sucked at. Any other men out there find that? … No, perhaps it was a me thing.

But … I found friends with a group of girls easily; they liked pretend games and that was something I could be good at. You see, I had a huge imagination and loved making up stories. Sometimes it was mermaids, and I was the prince; other times we were playing family. They played fairies a lot so I begged Mum to make me a fairy wand - that way I could be a fairy king. Did it occur to me that I was more of a fairy queen inside? I was 5 or 6, so no. Mum didn't bat an eyelid, thankfully.

Anyway, the group of girls I'd latched on to were fantastic, and we were always playing together. One of them was my first crush. … Eventually she moved away but there were other girls in primary school years.

Then, come secondary, the girls were into bigger and stronger boys. Cute looks weren't getting me any places, nor my obvious special status. I fought to fit in, to be able to compete, and to keep going, but I wasn't good at what you might call 'male pursuits'. To add to this, the secondary school was rough, and other lads regularly picked on me. I found a mixed group of friends though, 'cause we were all a bit special. One of the English teachers used to let us hide in her classroom during lunch breaks.

Anyway, fast track to college when I really explored. I was 18, studying performing arts, and the class above were putting on a cabaret. It didn't take much persuasion for me to get into fishnets, a dress with balloons down the front and dance to *Like a Virgin*. Am afraid the show didn't go down that well, but it felt awesome.

Then, the next year, I persuaded one of the other drama girls to paint my nails. Suddenly, a lot of the other boys in college wanted theirs done. It was experimenting, all in good fun. That was the time I realised what I wanted was to be a girl.

When I first mentioned this, people weren't sure, but it felt right to me. I wanted to wear beautiful dresses, and it felt like that was part of my identity. I didn't do it exactly yet.

Fast forward again to when I was 20, when I found myself some dresses, skirts, make-up and went out fully dressed. I was in Liverpool and had gone to Quiggins to get stuff, though girls in my class had offered to take

me clothes shopping, and I should have taken them up. What I found in Quiggins looked rather drag.

So, come the end of term, and everyone on our course was going out for a drink opposite the university. They knew I would be there in dress and make-up, and I turned up. It would have gone easily if some other lads in the bar hadn't tried to chat me up. The rest of the class jumped to my defence, sensing trouble.

A few days later I got called into our senior lecturer's office for a chat. What he said I can still remember "Leave the gender exploration till after university."

I tried to hide it, but it came out sometimes that I was more effeminate and different.

Now, having lived dressed as female, and with name changed by deed poll for coming on to 20 years, I don't regret coming out. But I wish I had found more supportive mates around me.

Bethany Birley

Eco-tip for June

Join in with a nature and climate initiative. One of A Rocha UK's firm beliefs is that we are more likely to nurture and defend God's creation if we spend time enjoying it. Joining in with wider initiatives also reminds us of the power and encouragement of being part of communities and taking action together. Churches Count on Nature, 30 Days Wild, and The Great Big Green Week all take place across June. Join an awareness-raising event or nature count as an individual, with your household or church. Find out more at caringforgodsacre.org.uk/churches-count on-nature-faqs, wildlifetrusts.org/30-days wild and greatbiggreenweek.com.

This is taken from A Rocha's calendar of monthly eco tips which you can download at ARUK-Eco-Tips-Calendar-2025-1.pdf

George & May Chew: Medical Missons

My wife and I are deeply appreciative to be received as members of Kingston United Reformed Church. In the evening of our life, May 89 and myself 92 in August 2025, we look forward to share a fellowship in Christ.

We are from Singapore and came to UK in the early 60s to pursue postgraduate studies in nursing (May) and paediatrics George). May is a convert to faith in her earlier years in nursing, and myself nurtured in a Christian home and attended Wesley Church Singapore. We are blessed with 2 daughters, a graduate teacher, a specialized general practitioner and a son, a consultant in sports and exercise medicine; and grandchildren.

Medical missions:
On completion of our studies in UK, May in midwifery and Queens nurse, and myself in paediatrics, we felt called to serve in medical missions in the Sahel belt in Ghana West Africa, instead of returning to Singapore. We met in the UK, and May recalls I did not propose our union in a formal way but said 'Will you come to Africa with me?' Our kind church ministers (Rye Lane Baptist Church, and East London Methodist Church) counselled and shared in prayer. We served from 1965 to 1977 in a very challenging medical missions (as the saying goes, 'when the going gets tough the tough get going'), by the grace of God in obedience to Christ's Great Commission 'GO', and through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The most vulnerable in health were children with outbreaks of meningitis, measles, diarrhoeal diseases, anthrax and malnutrition, including droughts, crops failure. We started to see sick children at 8am and ended at late evening, including supervising the overcrowded wards. We left in 1977 following the 4th military coup and realized our two daughters needed education in formal schooling. We settled in leafy Richmond, and they were blessed in their careers.

In 1998, on our retirement from the NHS, I was invited to join a tour of international doctors by the great great great grandson of Hudson Taylor (the medical missionary), Dr James Taylor. We settled in a remote rural farming community, a minority tribe in the Cooling Mountains of SW China. 800 - 2,000m high, where we began health care. It was a restricted region where cholera and tuberculosis were rife. I demonstrated the small red stringlike structure under the microscope as the cause of the TB, much to their amazement, in contrast to their superstitions and live chicken sacrifice to appease the spirits. We trained 300 village doctors and were thus able to visit the villages for health care and tell them 'the story of the feeding of the 5,000'. It was forbidden to

preach or share the Bible, but involvement in the health and care of the villagers and their living enabled the sharing of the hope, the truth and love of Jesus Christ through the empowering of the Holy Spirit. In time the village midwife came to accept the Lord and encourage small group prayer meetings in the village.

There were no roads except goat trails, and the villagers walked on narrow paths along the side of the high mountains. I looked down at the deep valleys below and preferred the inland route which was longer, and they had to send for the donkey cart for me to reach the 52 scattered villages. A course of TB treatment for 6 months was 600 RMB, but the farmer earned 400 RMB a year. We had 40 prayer partners, and donations were sent to the HQ in Hong Kong and diverted to the local hospital. To accept responsibility, each patient paid 10 - 15 RMB. I tried to connect clean water from the mountain springs to the villagers through rubber pipes but the pipes burst as the gradient was too high - I was never a water engineer! I introduced a system of Biogas toilets for public hygiene and provided for lighting and cooking through the gas generated. I introduced young doctors from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Canada, and medical students to undertake their electives to the medical missions; and knew we would not outlast our physical abilities in our retirement period. We left following a hand-over; and on returning to UK, I had the opportunity to have both knees replaced, much to the astonishment and sympathy of the kind orthopaedic surgeon, for the pain of both swollen knees (period served 1999-2004).

Addendum:

- accredited local preacher in the circuit of Epsom and Sutton 2006-2025.
- BA MA (Trinity)
- member of the chaplaincy to Kingston Hospital - retired
- member of the Kingston Magistracy (JP) - retired
- trustee of UK Bible Society - retired

Swan May & George LN Chew (Dr)

Archive of the month

This month's photo shows a Sunday School staff conference held at Beatrice Webb House, Holmbury St Mary, in the autumn of 1966. Sixty years ago our church ran two Sunday Schools: one at Eden Street and another at Tudor Hall in Tudor Drive. There is just one person in this photo who can still be seen at KURC on Sunday mornings – I wonder who it might be!

John Fisher

Church reading volunteers

Thank you to everyone who has been volunteering for reading at church services. We are now introducing more ways church members can volunteer for reading.

There will be rota lists on the notice boards at the front and back entrances of the church, so please sign up before and after church services or during the week. Alternatively, you can contact me directly if you wish to do a reading: email: neela.kulk@googlemail.com.

I will also continue to send out emails asking for volunteer readers, for dates where nobody has already signed up.

Neela Kulk

URC offers new Pope greetings and prayers

The Revd Timothy Meadows, Moderator of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church, has offered Pope Leo XIV greetings and prayers from the URC after his election as Supreme Pontiff of the Catholic Church.

“On behalf of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church, I extend our warmest greetings to His Holiness Pope Leo XIV, and assure His Holiness, along with our Catholic sisters and brothers, of our continued prayers and support at this significant juncture in the life of the Church world-wide.

“The United Reformed Church joins with His Holiness in the call to peace and in the sacred endeavour to build bridges of compassion and justice.”

Source: URC website

KURC windows and roof project

We are most grateful to Southern Synod for agreeing to award us a significant grant to enable us to progress our project to renew the windows and upgrade the roof. The project budget is £273.5k which includes fees, contingency and VAT. We will contribute £85k from our reserves as agreed at the March church meeting.

We now need to agree on the logistics and programme with the contractor, Maguire Brothers. The work will likely take 12 to 14 weeks and will need to be coordinated with Catherine and our premises activity. As soon as we have dates, we will let you know.

Linda Austin

JIPT – The Joint Public Issues Team

JPIT is a partnership between the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church, whose purpose **is to help the Churches to work together for peace and justice through listening, learning, praying, speaking and acting on public policy issues.**

#

The work of the team aims to:

- Share the message in words and action that political engagement is integral to Christian discipleship.
- Understand what churches need in order to speak and act prophetically and prayerfully on key issues of justice and peace.
- Equip, energise, affirm, support and resource our churches, at both local and denominational level, in their engagement with politics and public issues.
- Enable our Churches to speak together with a distinctively Christian voice in promoting justice and campaigning on public issues
- Build deeper coalitions and partnerships to further these outcomes locally, regionally, in the nations, and internationally.

Last year it lunched an initiative CAN Constituency Action Network. It was launched close to the date of the General Election but had been 2 years in the planning phase. Christian Aid launched a similar initiative Breaking Bread with your MP. I was assured that the 2 initiatives were complementary and that the 2 organisations were aware of what the other was doing. Its aim is that churches should seek to develop a friendly relationship with their MP. Many of us in Kingston would say we have that but I know from nationwide groups I am in that that is not the case in other constituencies.

Church meeting agreed last number that as a church we would join this initiative. We have arranged to meet Sir Ed Davey the MP for Kingston and Surbiton on 2nd June 2025 at his constituency office. The church building just falls within his constituency boundaries.

Following standard British parliamentary procedure he says he can only see constituents. Cathy Seymour is coming as church secretary. For security reasons I have to submit in advance the names and addresses of those meeting him.

Following the issues that JPIT and Christian Aid are concerned about we hope to discuss

1 the progress (or non progress!) of the CAN bill (ie the Climate and Nature Bill). This is a private members bill. The Climate and Nature Bill (CAN Bill) has made some progress but faces challenges. It had a Second Reading debate on January 24, 2025, which was adjourned by Government whips, effectively delaying the bill's progress. The bill is not currently making any progress toward becoming law according to Zero Hour https://www.zerohour.uk/laboursopportunity/. Some Labour figures, like Steve Reed, expressed disappointment and a desire for the bill's success, and Ed Miliband pledged to develop legislative proposals with Zero Hour.

2 The problem of debt especially Majority world Debt and the possibility of a financial debt for climate damage debt swop. Debt-for-climate swaps are agreements where a portion of a country's debt is reduced or restructured in exchange for its commitment to invest the freed-up funds in climate action projects. These swaps can involve public debt forgiveness, private debt refinancing, or new loans with better terms, all aimed at providing fiscal space for climate investments. This is a complicated issue with a range of views!

More information is available at **https://jpit.uk/can/becoming-a-can-church https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3707 https://www.zerohour.uk/climate-and-nature-bill/ https://www.climatepolicyinitiative.org/publication/debt-for-climate-swaps-a-primer-for-fics-members/**

Or speak to me!

Christine Thompson

Rhiannon's Voices of Hope walk

Thanks to everyone who sponsored me on my walk - it raised an amazing £472 which will really make such a difference to our work! If you'd like to know more about what we do, head to www.voh.org.uk

A sunny day, full of grace

Feeling deeply thankful today.

I finally had the chance to visit Steve Wenman, who has lovingly watched my two children grow up in KURC since my eldest was just 8 months old (he is 11 years old now!)

From Messy Church and YPG to Sunday School, she was faithfully there, week in and week out, pouring love into the little ones.

Now that she's moved to North West London to be closer to her daughter Nicola, it's been almost a year since we last saw each other. But I've thought of her often and missed her dearly.

So today felt like such a blessing. Sally kindly accompanied me, and we had a beautiful time catching up during our long journey, making the journey much easier. And thanks to Nicola, who generously picked us up from the station to her house, we were finally reunited.

Nicola prepared a delicious lunch for us, and her homemade Victoria sponge cake, layered with cream and berries, was an absolute showstopper.

We sat together in her lovely sunny garden, chatting, sharing recent life, laughing, and even being joined by two very charming cats.

Later, Steve welcomed us into her new flat and introduced us to her neighbours. It warmed my heart to see her surrounded by some friendship and peace, still carrying the same quiet strength and joy we've always known in her.

Days like this are reminders of how God's love carries us through the seasons of life—woven through old friendships, shared meals, beautiful weather, and memories.

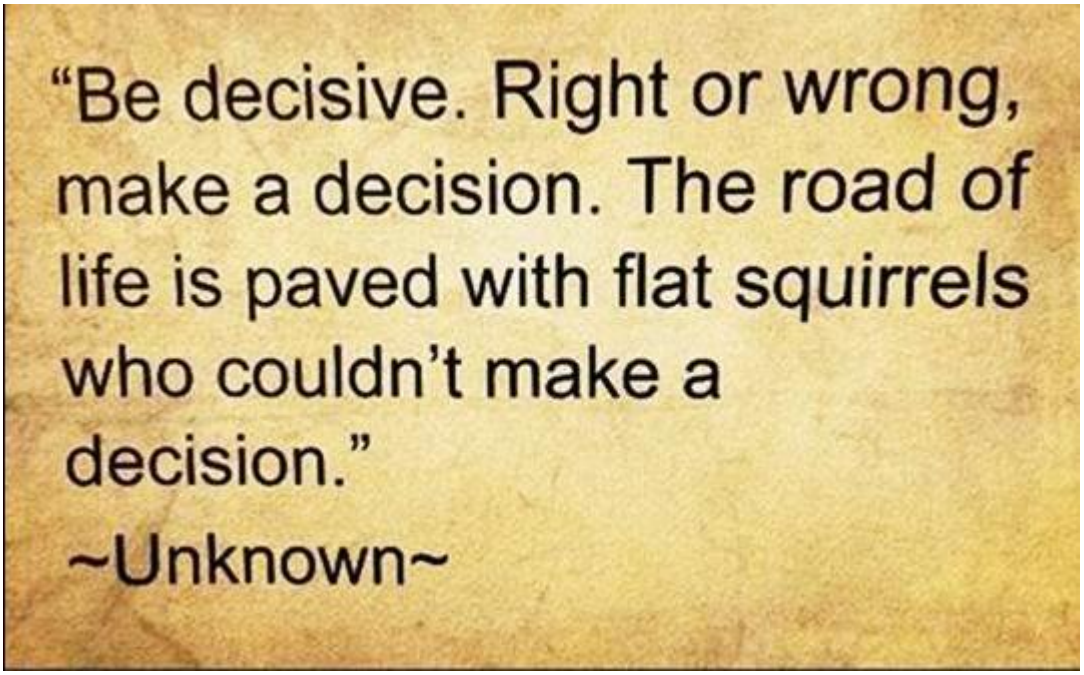
Hope we will visit her again. Soon!

Yu-Ting Hsu

Organ spectacular!

We are delighted to announce that Stephen Westrop, formerly organist at Norwich Cathedral and All Saints Kingston, has kindly agreed to give a lunchtime recital on our new digital organ on ***Thursday 22 May at 12.30pm.*** This will be the third time Stephen has played for us. He has chosen pieces that demonstrate a wide range of styles and stops including the most well-known organ piece of all: Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D minor. As usual, admission is free with a retiring collection.

Please note that Elia Stavrou's piano recital will now take place on Thursday 12 June at 12.30, ***not*** 5 June as previously advertised.



Friends from KURC's Foyer

Graham Lapthorn: The King's Storeroom

I can hardly believe it has been just over five years since Kingston URC kindly offered a space in the foyer for me to open a Christian bookshop, The King's Storeroom. Time flies! It has been a privilege to serve the Christian community in Kingston and beyond, being the only Christian bookshop in SW London, and that is thanks to Lesley's view of "Nothing ventured nothing gained" when I asked if it was possible to set up shop in The Richard Mayo foyer.

Since then I have had the joy of getting to know the community of people who are regular visitors to the foyer, church members of Kingston URC and those who drop in to meet their friends or to have some down time from the busyness of life, all while I serve in the shop. Many interesting conversations have been had, praying into situations and rejoicing in prayers answered, and standing alongside folks when life hits hard. My life has been enriched by this precious community.

The shop itself specialises in large and giant print Bibles, Christian greeting cards for all occasions, books and gifts, and I am never ceased to be amazed as I chat to folks from different church traditions how much God is saying the same thing to all His people, just in different ways. It is very encouraging. At the moment it seems there is a ground swell call to seek God's face in prayer like never before, we live in exciting times. info@thekingsstoreroom.org)

David Lester: "Sport has been my life"

Sport has been my life for 45 years, ever since my dad took me to West Ham at Upton Road and I was hooked! The atmosphere was electric; even walking to the Ground from Upton Park tube station you could hear the roar.

How lucky we are. TV lets us see what makes and, sadly, breaks a champion. Inner strength, calmness, bravery, stamina are all on show – and sometimes sadness, disbelief, heartbreak. And that's only supporting West Ham!

Many heroes such as Martina Navratilova I have been fortunate to see. And I have read her autobiography – a favourite read. She is a truly great

champion of her sport, if not an icon. She wrote how she lived for the moment of walking out to play. Everything was a bonus to her after that!

Ruby Walsh was endearing – calm, quiet, but a marvellous National Hunt jockey, Irish Champion jockey and prince among jockeys.

Billy Bonds was the he ‘cavalier heart and soul’ of the West Ham defence, playing 750+ games for the club. The iconic images of him are with socks rolled down, steaming up the pitch or bravely defending, He is my personal favourite, always a West Ham player – a rare breed in this day and age! Billy Bonds was the captain when West Ham actually won something in 1975 and 1980. They beat Fulham and Arsenal in the FA Cup Finals; his leadership and determination always being there at the right time and in the right place. Even now he takes people round the Olympic Stadium as the club’s ambassador, which he and Trevor Brooking deserve – if not a knighthood for ‘Bonzo’!

John Higgins, the great Scottish four-times world champion at snooker, said after losing in the quarter final, “It still hurts losing, but I’ve list to a great champion and friend. And I know what’s important in life – and that’s Denise (wife) and the kids. Hopefully they will lift me up; and life goes on”. Amen to that.

Georgi Todorov: KURC and me

I first came to England in 2009 to see AC/DC in Concert at Wembley Stadium.

I spent three weeks holiday here in Kingston. I visited several places, including Hampton Court, Madame Tussaud’s London Bridge, and I liked it so much – it was far better than Bulgaria. I decided to leave my job in Bulgaria and move here permanently in January 2010, and from 2014 I started to work at Kingston United Reformed Church..

I very much to watch football like, especially Liverpool, whom I’ve supported for 25 years - particularly as they as they won the league this year. I also like watching movies on my day off and going for long walks.

The experience of working in the church has given me so may new friends and I have met very many nice people during my time here. It has been my favourite job of all time, because of the way people treat me here. And I am pleased to keep on working for the church.

Christian Aid Week in pictures

About 40 people took on Richard Scorer's excellent quiz, which kicked off the week for KURC and raised £657.50 on behalf of KCAG, a collection of approx. 6 local churches who combine activities to raise funds for Christian Aid.

During the week, KURC volunteers limbered up for Saturday's Christian Aid dance-fest in Clarence Street by distributing CA Week donation envelopes to local households,

As is rapidly becoming a local Christian Aid Week tradition, clergy from All Saints, Kingston Methodist Church and of course KURC were joined by the braver members of their congregations to set the town alight with uniquely compelling fundraising performances of the *Macarena* in front of the Bentall's Centre on the closing Super-Saturday of the week.

With thanks to Yu-Ting, Ray and Teresa for the photographs

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

Smiles & thoughts

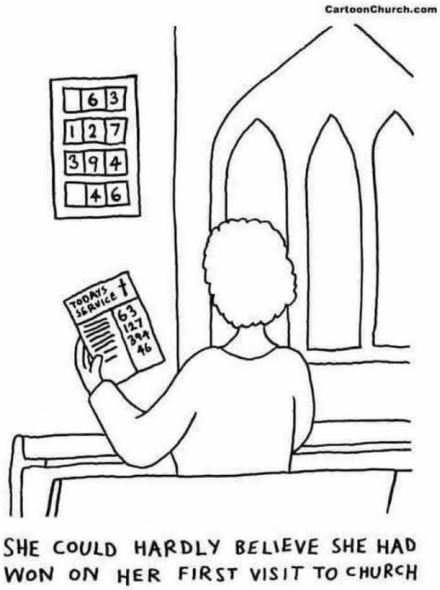
A Geordie sits down at a barber's shop in Ashington and asks the barber if he can have a perm.

The barber says "alreet" and clears his throat...

"… Ah wandered lueernly as a clood…"

Here's a quotation from Mahatma Gandhi: "When I despair, I remember that all through history the ways of truth and love have always won. There have been tyrants and murderers and, for a time, they can seem invincible but in the end they always fall. Think of it….. always."

"If you want everyone to like you, don't be a pastor, sell ice cream…."
Ed Stetzer



Linda Austin

This one was published in the Times a few years ago

The Grace spoken at dinners of the British Association of Urological Surgeons:

'O Lord our saviour, Lord divine,
Who turneth water into wine,
Forgive us (we are stupid men):
We're going to turn it back again'

John Fisher

CHILD ACTION LANKA (CAL) – SRI LANKA

Earlier this year Ray Charlton was back in Sri Lanka. Volunteering with Child Action Lanka, which is a remarkable charity founded nearly 20 years ago, by Debbie Edirisingh. Started in a small basement under a church in Kandy. From that small room in one city, CAL now has 10 Child Development Centres, located around Sri Lanka.

Debbie and her team do a phenomenal job in teaching, developing, educating and feeding some of the poorest children and families in Sri Lanka. There is no social safety net as there is the UK and the work CAL does is truly transforming the lives of those they help.

COME AND MEET DEBBIE AND HEAR THE CAL STORY.

AT THE URC, SUNDAY 8th JUNE 2025 AT 5PM.

Ray Charlton's JustGiving Page

Please speak to Ray Charlton if you would like more information or if you would like to make a donation to CAL.

Join us for an

Afternoon Tea Concert

Event highlights:

- Sing-along featuring Voices of Hope's older people's choirs
- Music and dance from local multi-cultural groups
- Relax and enjoy a free afternoon teal

Saturday
14th June

Kingston United Reformed Church
KT1 1HZ

2-4 P.M.
Cost: Free

Book your place: **voh.org.uk/tea-concert**
or call 07467 420 774, giving your name and number of tickets required

IBRA readings for June

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE
Prepare yourself
Sunday 1 June Luke 11:14-36
Monday 2 June Luke 11:37-54
Tuesday 3 June Luke 12:1-21
Wednesday 4 June Luke 12:22-48
Thursday 5 June Luke 12:49 - 13:9
Friday 6 June Luke 13:10-35
Saturday 7 June Luke 14:1-24

PRAYER IN THE NEW TESTAMENT LETTERS
Sunday 8 June (Pentecost) Acts 2:1-18
Monday 9 June 1 John 1:5-10
Tuesday 10 June Ephesians 5:15-20
Wednesday 11 June Ephesians 6:18-20
Thursday 12 June Philippians 4:4-9
Friday 13 June 1 Timothy 2:1-10
Saturday 14 June James 5:13-18

COMFORT AND HOPE (Isaiah 40-55) (1)
Sunday 15 June Isaiah 40:1-5
Monday 16 June Isaiah 40:6-11
Tuesday 17 June Isaiah 42:1-7
Wednesday 18 June Isaiah 42:10-16
Thursday 19 June Isaiah 43:1-7
Friday 20 June Isaiah 43:18-21
Saturday 21 June Isaiah 44:1-8

COMFORT AND HOPE (Isaiah 40-55) (2)
Sunday 22 June Isaiah 45:1-7
Monday 23 June Isaiah 48:6-13
Tuesday 24 June Isaiah 49:7-18
Wednesday 25 June Isaiah 51:1-6
Thursday 26 June Isaiah 52:7-10
Friday 27 June Isaiah 54:1-8
Saturday 28 June Isaiah 55:1-11

ABUNDANCE AND WANT
Plenty
Sunday 29 June Deuteronomy 28:1-14
Monday 30 June Matthew 9:35-38

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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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 July is Friday, 13 June 2025
Editor: Catherine Treweek, e-mail: premises@urckingston.org.uk

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

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: www.kingstonurc.org. You can also follow us on Facebook and Instagram

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