

The COURIER

December 2011

United Reformed Church
New Road, Brentwood

December 2011

Giving Gifts to Strangers

Giving a gift to stranger seems to be a strange thing to do, at least when you first think about it. Yet, for Christians, should that be the case. After all, the magi, also known as ‘the wise men’, however many there were of them, presented their gifts to someone they had never met before. As we approach the end of one year and the beginning of another; as we celebrate Christmas, I’m glad to say that the three congregations in this pastorate make specific efforts to give Christmas gifts to strangers.

All three congregations hold ‘gift and toy services’. At the beginning or during worship those present bring forward gifts that go to groups and organisations that can use or will especially value receiving a gift this Christmas. At Brentwood URC gifts go to an organisation called Community Links, which is an east London charity working with 30,000 people each year. They run youth clubs and children’s activities, including working with children who have been excluded from mainstream education. They also provide advice for those with benefits, housing and debt problems.

At Billericay URC two organisations benefit from the gift and toy service. HARP (Homeless Action Resource Project) is a charity combining the services of the former Southend Centre for the Homeless and Southend Night Shelter for the Homeless. Its main objectives are to provide homeless people with help and advice in securing accommodation, and to alleviate homelessness through the provision of short-term emergency accommodation. Other gifts collected at Billericay Mountnessing Court is an NHS residential care unit in Billericay, caring for a range of people. Members of the Billericay congregation visit during the year to lead worship for Easter, Harvest and Christmas.

At Ingatestone URC gifts go to Chelmsford Women's Aid's, an organisation whose aim is to support women and children who are experiencing or have experienced domestic violence, encouraging them to develop skills, gain confidence and enable them to exercise their own power and to use all available opportunities and choices to successfully move on in their lives.

Recently I was leading one of the Thursday morning prayer meeting at Ingatestone URC (starts at 9:15am in the West Room, concludes prior to 10:00am – all welcome to come along if available!). The passage we were looking at was Matthew 25: 31-46, the passage that envisions the 'Son of Man' dividing the peoples up like flocks of sheep and goats, the former receiving God's blessing, the latter consigned to 'eternal punishment'. What we concentrated upon, however, was the basis on which the division was made, not on this occasion because of belief or lack of it but because of how they had treated others. The others include hungry, the thirsty, the poor, the sick, the imprisoned and the stranger; the ones who are facing difficulty in life.

I'm not commending bringing a gift for a stranger to a toy and gift service as a form of eternal-life insurance, a means of qualifying you for membership of the blessed 'sheep' rather than the rejected 'goats'. Nor am I suggesting our congregations can polish their collective halo to an even greater brightness just because we make some small gifts on one Sunday of the year. Still, it seems to me that when we do this sort of thing we are taking a step along the right path and it is an example of how God wants his people to live at Christmas and for the rest of the year as well.

*"The king will answer,
'Truly I tell you: just as you did it to one of the least of these who
are members of my family, you did it to me.'"*

(Matthew 25: 40)

Trevor

If you wish to find out more or even offer support to any of the voluntary organisations mentioned above...

Community Links www.community-links.org/

HARP www.harpsouthend.co.uk/

Chelmsford Women's Aid www.chelmsfordwa.co.uk/

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

As this edition of the COURIER goes to print, we are saddened to report that **PETER OAKLEY** passed away this afternoon (20th November) following a stroke and pneumonia. We send our love and deepest sympathy to **JENNIE** and the family at this difficult time.

Birthdays

We send birthday greetings to all those who will be celebrating in December and January

As usual at this time of year there will be many who will be travelling to visit family and friends and others who will be entertaining visitors themselves.

Whether you are at home or away this festive season we wish all Courier readers a peaceful and blessed Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

Jenny Mayo

Christmas Arrangements

Dates for your Diary

Christmas is fast approaching and, after initial publication in the previous edition of the COURIER, we thought it sensible to provide you with another reminder of forthcoming events:

Sunday 27th November, 10:00am

Advent Sunday Communion Service

Sunday 27th November, 5:00pm

Joint Pastorate Advent Service, Buttsbury Church

Friday 9th December, 6:00pm

Decorating the Church for Christmas followed by a meal together – fun for all the family!

Sunday 11th December, 10:00am

Toy and Gift Service

Monday 12th December

Monday Guild Christmas Meeting

Wednesday 14th December, 12:30pm

Wednesday Lunch Club Christmas Meal – preceded by a 20 minute worship service at 11:45am, to which all are welcome

Friday 16th December, 9:45am

Christmas at Coffee Shop – telling the Christmas story, a few carols and some seasonal refreshments – all welcome

Sunday 18th December, 10:00am

Morning Worship featuring hymns and carols chosen by members of Junior Church

Sunday 18th December, 6:30pm

Our traditional service of Carols and Readings

Wednesday 21st December, 6:30pm

Celebration

Saturday 24th December, 11:15pm

Midnight Communion Service

Sunday 25th December, 10:00am

Christmas Day Worship – for all the family

Toy & Gift Service – Community Links
11th December

Community Links is based in Newham, East London, one of the poorest and most deprived areas in the UK where 55% of children live in poverty. Many have experienced family breakdown, violence and abuse. Throughout the year Community Links organises clubs, activities and services for over 3,700 disadvantaged children each week. Each Christmas they aim to provide a bag of gifts for each child, aged between three months and fifteen years, to open on Christmas morning. This is the organisation which collects all the toys and gifts given at our Toy and Gift Service and without this appeal they already know of many children who will be receiving nothing at all this Christmas.

This would welcome...

New Toys

Buy toys that have the Lion Mark CE to show they are safe for use by children within the age groups given. Please do not buy war toys or toys that promote violence. Suggestions are:

- First toys – for the new born to 3 years, i.e. rattles etc.
- Early years toys – for 3-5 years, i.e. shape sorters, blocks, pull toys, etc.
- Annuals and story books, musical instruments, drawing sets, craft kits, model kits, boxed games, jigsaws, fuzzy felt, lego, construction sets, footballs, dolls and accessories, soft toys, etc.

Good quality second hand toys

These are also welcome and are used in their year-round children's clubs.

Cash or cheque donations

If you prefer you can give a donation in this form and Community Links will buy suitable gifts. Cheques should be made payable to 'Community Links'.

Thank you for your support for our Toy and Gift appeal.

Jenny Mayo

Christmas Worship – Please Note...

There are bound to be a lot of comings and goings for the next few weeks, so if you are on any Church rotas during the Christmas and New Year period and plan to be away, please check that there is someone available to cover your duties. This will help make the Church Secretary's Christmas happier and more peaceful with no last-minute panics!

Jenny Mayo

50 Years of Amnesty International

This Church has supported the work of Amnesty International for many years through our Communion collections and their Greeting Card campaign at Christmas time.

This year Amnesty is celebrating its half century of working for human rights world-wide and is asking all supporters to write a letter or send a card on 10th December (Human Rights Day), or any time over the Christmas period, to show support for someone facing human rights abuse. Full details can be found on the Amnesty website www.amnesty.org.uk/write or please speak to me.

Every card and letter matters. For prisoners of conscience, for families whose relatives have disappeared, for people in danger for defending human rights.

Jenny Mayo

What Sort of Church?

Evening worship at Brentwood United Reformed Church, at 5:00pm on the third Sunday of each month, recommenced in September. Each service includes music, prayer, scripture, sermon and Holy Communion. The Minister, Trevor Jamison, leads all of the services.

Everyone is welcome to come along to worship and explore what it means to be part of the URC.

January 15th Christian good citizens, distinct from the state

February 19th Striving for unity, bringing praises to God

Trevor Jamison

From Ingatestone URC... Celebrating Two Hundred Years of our Church's Life in 2012

In 2012 we mark the two hundredth anniversary of the life and worship of the congregation at its present site in Ingatestone. To mark this milestone in Christian witness we are putting on a series of special events during the year, including some in association with Ingatestone Choral Society and Ingatestone and Fryerning Drama Club. A varied programme commences on New Year's Day with morning worship to welcome in 2012, led by our Minister, Trevor Jamison, looking to the future, yet also including music and readings that were current in 1812.

Other events include a classical concert in January and an evening of drama and song in June. In two afternoon events in June and October we welcome to lead us our former Minister, the Reverend Sheila Maxey and then, later in the year, the Reverend Dr David Cornick, General Secretary of Churches Together in England.

On the day when Sheila Maxey leads worship for us everyone with a current or former association with the congregation is invited to come along to worship together and then spend time together, enjoying the refreshments and conversation. David Cornick will be encouraging us, along with guests from other Churches, not only to celebrate the past but to look with confidence to being a Church for the future.

Programme for the Year

1 st January, 10:00am	New Year Celebration Service
28 th January, 7:30pm	Classical Concert, featuring music both the well known and the less known, both ancient and modern.
16 th June, 7:30pm	An evening of music and drama, featuring Ingatestone Choral Society and Ingatestone and Fryerning Drama Club.
30 th June, 3:00pm	Celebration service and get-together for everyone who has a current or previous association with Ingatestone URC.

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14th & 15th July Weekend exhibition of two hundred years of Ingatestone and the Church, in pictures, words and flowers.

6th October, 3:00pm David Cornick, General Secretary of Churches Together in England, on *Churches With a Past Which Have a Future*.

14th October, 10:30am Anniversary Worship (for 199 years and 364 days since the Church opened on this site).

For further information on any of the above please contact:

The Minister, the Reverend Trevor Jamison...

01277 653707

tjamisonurc@tiscali.co.uk

...or the Church Secretary, Peter Hunt:

01277 355322

pjhunt007@tiscali.co.uk

Ingatestone URC

Opportunities to Serve as a Games Pastor

Games Pastors will play a lead role in responding to the practical and spiritual needs of thousands of visitors coming for the 2012 Games. Where people gather – from transport terminals to games venues – Games Pastors will be there. If you've heard of Street Pastors, Street Angels or Town Pastors you will get the picture. *More Than Gold* is working with the transport hubs and the Churches to make sure the right number of the right kind of people are where they are needed.

Why are Game Pastors needed?

During London 2012, vast numbers will be arriving at airports and train terminals, and thronging games venues and the approaches to them. For example:

- St Pancras International Station, the 'Gateway to the Games', expects around 100,000 additional travellers every day;
- Heathrow Airport will have its busiest day ever after the Olympic Closing Ceremony and its second busiest day immediately following the Paralympics;
- Every day up to 800,000 extra people will travel into London – spilling out into streets around Games venues, official big screen live sites and other venues;

...and many will need the support of a friendly face and a caring attitude – in the form of a Games Pastor.

What will Games Pastors do?

Games Pastors will be wherever people gather in large numbers. They will be trained, equipped and supported to assist travellers, sightseers and spectators with practical advice and help. And all the while they will have an eye open for those who may be in special need.

I have been sent full details and an application form for anyone who is interested. Please contact me for further details or directly via the contact details below.

www.morethangold.org.uk

0845 475 2012

info@morethangold.org.uk

Sally Bealey

Action for Family Carers

Do you...

- Look after an ill or disabled (physically or mentally) friend or relative?
- Support someone with learning difficulties?
- Care for an elderly person?
- Regularly see to the daily needs of a friend, neighbour or relative?

Many people looking after a loved one, friend or a neighbour do not think of themselves as a Carer. If someone is regularly depending upon you for their needs, emotional or physical, then you are a carer.

We can offer:

- One to one visits, information and signposting;
- Support groups;
- Help with benefits and filling in forms;
- Help to navigate health and social care and advocacy;
- Befriending and emotional support.

We cover Brentwood, Billericay and Wickford as well as Chelmsford, Maldon and Braintree areas. Our services are free and confidential.

To talk to someone or for more information please contact us:

01621 851640

info@affc.org.uk

Brickhouse Farm, Poulton Close, Maldon, Essex, CM9 6NG

Action for Family Carers

Brentwood URC Knitters

The Brentwood URC Knitters recently sent some shawls to Anna Briggs to take to people bereaved and traumatised by recent events in Norway.

The following letter has been received from Anna.

This is just to let you all know that Jenny Ayre and I returned from Oslo this morning. It was such a privilege meeting over 200 men, women and children from the Utoya families who were present. And they loved your shawls, scarves, corsages and friendship bracelets. They were extremely moved by your generosity and we had an evening of hugs and getting to know people's stories.

When I get back in a week I will do an e-newsletter and update the Knitting People Together FaceBook page. Meanwhile, on behalf of our new friends in Norway – for friends they certainly are, now.

We thank you all again – this was a great success!

Anna & Jenny
Knitting People Together UK

Monday Guild

At our meeting on Monday 14th November we had a welcome return visit from Dr Mary Tate. She showed us some beautiful photographs taken in gardens which she had visited. Many of the views showed rhododendrons and azaleas in bloom with an amazing variety of colours. We also saw some very impressive pictures of a cactus garden. It had been planted on a hillside and the plants showed a tremendous variety of shapes and sizes. Thank you, Mary, for an enjoyable afternoon.

Our Christmas meeting will be on Monday 12th December. In the new year we expect to continue to meet on the second Monday of every month.

It has been suggested that members of the congregation might have colour slides of past Church events which they might like to share with us on a future occasion. If anyone has any do let me know.

Margaret Cheer

Communion Alms Fund Collections

Our December 2011 collection (to be made on 1st January 2012) is for Galloway's Society for the Blind.

This charity makes Reform magazine available free of charge on tape for anyone who is blind or visually impaired. Galloway's mission is "to enable people with a visual impairment to gain greater independence and minimise the effects of reduced vision."

Our January 2011 collection is for Action for Children.

Their aim is simple but ambitious – to help the UK's most vulnerable children and young people achieve their full potential. They are helped to do this with a wide and innovative range of services for them and their families, as well as by campaigning for a policy change.

Stanley Francis

Prayers for December & January

Here are some things you might like to pray for during the two month period covered by this issue of the COURIER.

Week beginning:

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|---------------------------|---|
| December 4 th | The BSCWT and its work in schools
The retail sector and its employees
People in need in the inner cities
(Toy & Gift Service 11 th December) |
| December 11 th | Our uniformed organisations
The Wednesday Luncheon Club
(Christmas Lunch 14 th December)
Coffee Shop
(Christmas event 16 th December) |
| December 18 th | CRISIS, SHELTER and homeless people
People under stress at Christmas time
Areas of conflict around the world |

December 25 th	The worldwide Church as it celebrates Christmas Children and families known to us Those who are persecuted for their faith
January 1 st	The life & mission of our Church in 2012 Our Minister, Elders and leaders Those who suffer economic hardship
January 8 th	Hirers of our building Students and their families Prisoners and prison workers
January 15 th	Christian Unity (week of prayer begins 18 th January) The financial sector and its employees World peace
January 22 nd	Churches Together in Brentwood Refugees and asylum seekers Young people in the URC
January 29 th	Brentwood Methodist Church Those called to ministries in the Church Our three Church pastorate

TREASURER'S REPORT OCTOBER

WEEKLY OFFERTORIES

	<u>This Year</u>	<u>Last Year</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Budget</u>
October	£1,085 (5 weeks)	£1,296 (5 weeks)	DOWN £211	£1,350
Cumulative from 01/01/11	£12,120 (44 weeks)	£12,182 (44 weeks)	DOWN £62	£11,880
Cumulative Weekly Average	£275	£277	DOWN £1	£270

Steven Burns

THE NEXT COURIER

The next issue of The COURIER for February 2012 will be available on Sunday 29th January.

If you have articles for inclusion please ensure that these are passed to the Editor as early as possible during the week commencing Sunday 15th January and before the final deadline of Sunday 22nd January.

DUTY ROTAS DECEMBER

	Flowers	Vestibule
4 th	Mary Tate	Margaret Cheer
11 th	Ann Hart	Rosalie Brentnall
18 th	Patricia Benham & Team	Jim Bealey
25 th	Patricia Benham	Charles Steynor

	Vestry Elder	Steward	Notices
4 th	Carolyn Rudkin	Sally Bealey	Steve Burns
11 th	Jenny Mayo	Margaret Cheer	Rosalie Brentnall
18 th	Charles Steynor	Bill Crisp	The Cheers
25 th	Margaret Cheer	Stanley Francis	Stanley Francis

	Reader	Prayers of Intercession
4 th	Jim Bealey	Sally Bealey
11 th	Margaret Cheer	
18 th	Bill Crisp	Tina Farmer
25 th	Steve Burns	

	Coffee
4 th	Linda Hanna and Eileen Gault
11 th	Anne and Trevor Jeffrey
18 th	Gabrielle Crowther and Ann Hart
25 th	

DUTY ROTAS JANUARY

	Flowers	Vestibule
1 st	Patricia Benham	Jim Stratford
8 th	Elaine Austen	Tony Cheer
15 th	Carolyn Rudkin	Stanley Francis
22 nd	Eileen Gault	Sally Bealey
29 th	Tina Farmer	Gillian Tytherleigh

	Vestry Elder	Steward	Notices
1 st	Carolyn Rudkin	Clive Rudkin	Steve Burns
8 th	Jim Stratford	Patricia Benham	Rosalie Brentnall
15 th	Steve Burns	Gillian Tytherleigh	The Cheers
22 nd	Rosalie Brentnall	Sheila Maxey	Stanley Francis
29 th	Bill Crisp	Mary Tate	Jenny Mayo

	Reader	Prayers of Intercession
1 st	Clive Rudkin	Clive Rudkin
8 th	Trevor Jeffrey	
15 th	Ian Davidson	The Cheers
22 nd	Kees Maxey	Kees Maxey
29 th	Charles Steynor	

	Coffee
1 st	Mary Tate and Valerie Robinson
8 th	Sally and Jim Bealey
15 th	Rosalie Brentnall and Patricia Benham
22 nd	Tina Farmer and Margaret Gazely
29 th	Sheila Crisp and Gillian Tytherleigh

CHURCH CALENDAR DECEMBER

Thursday	1 st	7:45pm 8:45pm	Music Workshop NIGHT PRAYER
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Sunday	4 th	10:00am	LINDA MEAD
Monday	5 th	7:45pm	Elders' Meeting
Wednesday	7 th	2:00pm	Brentwood URC Knitters
Thursday	8 th	8:30pm	SACRED SPACE
Friday	9 th	6:00pm	Decorating the Church for Christmas followed by Meal Together
Saturday	10 th		Hutton Union Church
Sunday	11 th	&	Christmas Tree Festival (see November COURIER)

Sunday	11 th	10:00am	THE MINISTER – Toy & Gift Service (see Page 9)
Monday	12 th	2:30pm	Monday Guild – Christmas Meeting (see Page 19)
Wednesday	14 th	11:45am 12:30pm	20 minute WORSHIP SERVICE Lunch Club Christmas Meal
Thursday	15 th	7:45pm 8:45pm	Music Workshop NIGHT PRAYER
Friday	16 th	9:45am	Christmas at Coffee Shop

Sunday	18 th	10:00am	WORSHIP GROUP featuring music chosen by members of Junior Church
		6:30pm	Readings & Carols with Candles
Wednesday	21 st	6:00pm	Christmas Celebration
Saturday	24 th	11:15pm	THE MINISTER – Christmas Eve Midnight Communion

Sunday	25 th	10:00am	FAITH PAULDING
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CHURCH CALENDAR JANUARY

Sunday	1 st	10:00am	HOLY COMMUNION – Charles Steynor; Preparation: Sally Bealey with Jim Bealey
Tuesday	3 rd	7:45pm	Elders' Meeting
Wednesday	4 th	2:00pm	Brentwood URC Knitters
Thursday	5 th	7:45pm	Music Workshop
		8:45pm	NIGHT PRAYER

Sunday	8 th	10:00am	THE MINISTER Followed by Church Meeting
Thursday	12 th	8:15pm	SACRED SPACE

Sunday	15 th	10:00am 5:00pm	BERYL HUNT HOLY COMMUNION – The Minister Christian Good Citizens, Distinct From The State
Monday	16 th	2:30pm 7:30pm	Monday Guild (see Page 19) Meeting to Discuss the Future of Church Fayres
18 th – 25 th January – Week of Prayer for Christian Unity			
Wednesday	18 th	2:00pm	Brentwood URC Knitters
Thursday	19 th	7:45pm 8:45pm	Music Workshop NIGHT PRAYER

Sunday	22 nd	10:00am	COLIN HUNT
Thursday	26 th	8:15pm	SACRED SPACE

Sunday	29 th	10:00am	HOLY COMMUNION – Preparation: Jim Bealey with Sally Bealey (Joint Service with Brentwood Methodist Church)
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The COURIER Team

wish all readers

A Joyous & Restful Christmas



& A Healthy & Happy 2012

