



The
United
Reformed
Church

The **COURIER**

December 2014/January 2015



United Reformed Church
New Road, Brentwood

BRENTWOOD UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
New Road, Brentwood, CM14 4GD

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A Joint Pastorate with Ingatestone And Billericay

United Reformed Churches

www.brentwood-urc.org.uk

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	Mrs Muriel Cantor	☎ 01277 223939
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Dear Friends,

As I emerge from under a mountain of boxes and catch with emails check diary and sort through an inordinate amount of bits of paper on my desk I am reminded constantly that we are fast approaching Christmas.



I like many of you, I have been receiving different charity catalogues since early September, and now that Halloween and Remembrance Sunday are over the advertisements on TV are full on Christmas. I have received a well-known gadget store Christmas catalogue with all the little stocking fillers, retro toys, games etc and last and not least the ‘things you never knew you needed until now’!

We all have them, the gadgets we been ‘conned’ into believing we need and it now sits in the back of a cupboard leaving us wondering what we can do with it or who we can palm it off too!

As Christians we **do have** something that everyone needs and there are many people who do not realise their need yet. We have Jesus.

Jesus is not a one minute wonder, he doesn’t need batteries and he will never go out of fashion but he does **reach all the parts** that others things fail to reach.

At Christmas there are always the presents that don’t quite reach the mark and even when we have spent an age buying presents, hoping we have got just the perfect one for a family

member; there always remains that tiny little doubt – will they like it.

But God in his infinite wisdom and love knew perfectly just what we each needed. He has given us his presence with us in his Son Jesus – Emmanuel. This gift is so perfect it fits all sizes and is with us 24/7.

If Jesus being God with us is not enough; Jesus is also God's love peace joy, forgiveness wholeness acceptance and much, much more. It is a gift that come with no strings attached; we haven't had be good all year we don't have to have all the answers; we don't even have to get our lives sorted out first. Jesus, God's gift comes to each of us just as we are, wherever we are and whoever we are.

Take God's gift to you and open it **now** because unlike the presents under the tree you don't even have to wait!

As a TV advert said a few years back; 'take it, it's yours!'

Love and blessings,
Ruth

P.S. Thank you from us both for your greetings and well wishes as we start to get settled in the manse.

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

Because The Courier is bimonthly we are not always quite up-to-date with family news. I hope that all members will keep me informed of any news and that no-one has been overlooked this time.

And again a very warm welcome to Ruth and her family.



Imola (from Hungary), who is a Time for God volunteer, living at The Grange is coming to our church on Sundays and has been helping with Junior Church. We all want to say a very warm welcome and thank you for her support with Junior Church.

Rosalie

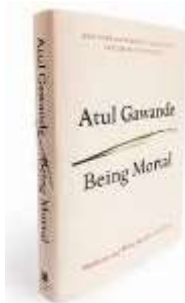
Book review: ‘ Being Mortal: illness, medicine and what matters in the end’ by Atul Gawande



Atul Gawande Credit Tim Llewellyn Atul Gawande is a US surgeon, of Indian Hindu origin. He has written several books, but this one seems to have touched a nerve in our society as well as in the US. It is extremely readable because it is full of stories of people's lives - old people facing going into a care home, young and ill people facing all kinds of treatment and surgery. It is a very personal book in that he brings his own family into the stories, and he tells stories against himself as he tries to practise what he preaches.

What does he preach? That keeping people safe and keeping them alive have, wrongly, become the top priorities in the minds of doctors and care workers and in the minds of those who put their trust in them. We are mortal – we will all die - and on the way to our deaths there are more important choices to be made than safety and survival. One of his amazing examples is of a care home which brought in parakeets and dogs and cats to be part of the place. As a result residents began to take care of them, to walk instead of sitting all the time and the end result was that they took less medication and they actually lived longer. He also tells stories of the suffering inflicted by too much chemotherapy or invasive surgery when the chances of it helping are small – just because the doctor and the patient do not manage to have a really honest conversation about death and about what the patient's priorities are for the time she has left.

Of course, the US context is different from ours, but the issues are the same. As Christians we should not be afraid to talk honestly about illness, ageing and



death and what really matters at such times, yet none of us finds it easy. I think this is an important and helpful book.

Sheila Maxey

Published by Profile Books Ltd at £15.99 (currently at Waterstones at £13.99).



EBOLA OUTBREAK

On the 30th October Christian Aid sent us an urgent request:

“We’re working flat out to protect people from the virus. We’ve given out 200,000 pairs of disposable gloves and 360kg of powdered chlorine for medical teams to keep it at bay. We have reached 1.2 million people with life-saving advice on how to avoid contracting Ebola. We need your help. Please hold a church collection.”

Our collections have raised £204.75, which has been sent to Christian Aid!

Stan Francis

NEWS FROM THE CHURCH SECRETARY

Christmas Events

Preparations for many of our Christmas events are now well under way and we hope that as many readers as possible will be able to participate in at least some of them.

Wednesday, 10th December – Lunch Club Christmas lunch

The Mayor of Brentwood has joined the 50+ members of the lunch club for the last few years. This very popular and happy occasion is preceded by a short carol service at 11.45 am in the church, and everyone is very welcome to attend this.

Friday, 12th December – Decorating the Church

This has become a real family event, beginning at 6 pm, as we make the church look festive and welcoming for our various Christmas celebrations. Putting up the decorations and lights and dressing our (two!) Christmas trees needs a lot of helpers so do join us. We reward ourselves with a “take-away” supper of fish and chips or pizza when the work is done.

Sunday, 14th December – Toy and Gift Service

This year the service will be led by our Minister, Revd. Ruth Mitchell and will include Holy Communion. All our gifts and offerings will once again be delivered to Community Links who continue to support families in one of the most deprived boroughs in the country, in the East End of London.

Friday, 19th December – Coffee Shop Christmas 9.45 – 11.30 am

Do come and join the regular mothers, carers and toddlers (plus other relatives and helpers) as they hear the Christmas story, sing some carols and enjoy some seasonal refreshments. This is the ideal opportunity to

show support for this important part of our church life which has been running for so many years.

Celebration – will be on Friday, 19th December if this is confirmed. Listen for further details.

Sunday, 21st December – Carol Service 6.30 pm

Our traditional service of lessons and carols, followed by refreshments, is always popular so do ask your friends to join us for this candle-lit service. There will be a retiring collection in aid of the special Christian Aid Appeal for Christmas.

Wednesday, 24th December – Christmas Eve 11.15 pm

Our friends from Brentwood Methodist Church have been invited to join us for this service of Holy Communion, led by Revd. Sheila Maxey.

Thursday, 25th December – Christmas Day 10 am

All are welcome at Morning Worship held at Brentwood Methodist Church.

Please let me know if you are away for any rota duties during the Christmas period and have not managed to swap with anyone else so that any gaps can be filled.

Finally we wish all readers of the Courier a very happy and peaceful Christmas and every blessing for the New Year.

Jenny Mayo

COMMUNION AIMS FUND



The retiring offering for December 2014 is for Galloways' 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".

The offering for January 2015 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 policy change.



SYNOD RETREAT AT CLARE PRIORY



Driving through the autumn Suffolk countryside on a Friday afternoon in November, I was reminded of the last time I made this journey - for the Spring retreat on a beautiful weekend in May. Now it was almost dark by the time I arrived just after 4 pm but some things never change and the approach to the beautiful priory buildings began the 24 hours of relaxation and time to feel again the presence of God in this house of prayer and hospitality.

This time we were looking at Advent but this was to be the theme of Saturday's meditations and in the meantime those who were staying on Friday night received the usual warm welcome, settled into our



rooms and joined the resident community for prayer before a simple home cooked supper and conversation with our fellow guests. Some were from other URC churches in the Synod but others come for a variety of reasons but all seeking the peace that the Priory offers. During the several years I have been coming to these events, I have met those who have been bereaved or recovering from serious illness, those with deep faith and those with little or none who still appreciate what the Priory experience has to offer.

The next morning the day guests arrived and the more structured part of the retreat began, led by Revd. Mary Irish and Revd. Birgit Ewald. There were sessions on Isaiah 40 vv3-11 and Mark 1 vv1-8, with music, images and reflections and later on praying with Scripture in our daily lives. In between there were periods for private prayer, a visit to the beautiful priory church or a walk in the grounds, and we all met for lunch of delicious home-made soup, bread and cheese, before the afternoon session and the final time of worship together before departure.

During the worship, Birgit read this poem which illustrates perfectly why we should treasure this time of Advent and not be in too much of a hurry to rush into Christmas.

Advent Longing

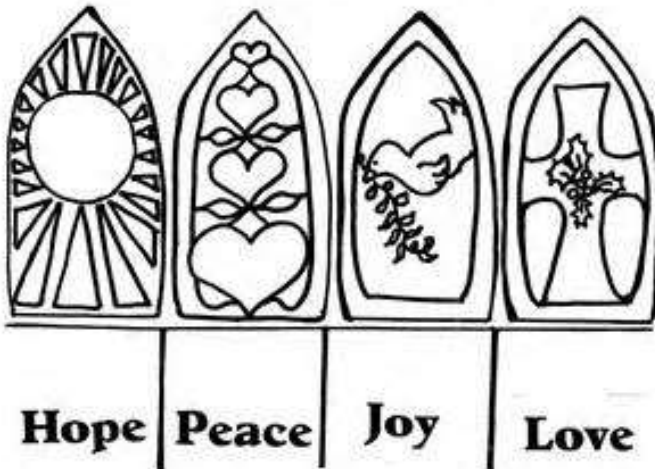
These are the greedy days.
It used to be
That Advent was a longing
fast,
A time to feel our need
in faith and tingling hope
And keen-eyed looking
forward.
Now we cannot wait
But day by day and week by
week
We celebrate obsessively
Clutching at Christmas.
When at last it comes,
The day itself,
Our glass is empty.
We have held the feast
Already, and the news is stale
Before it ever reaches us.
We cheat ourselves.
Yet - somehow - still we hope
In these spoiled days
That there may be a child.

W.S. Beattie



Jenny Mayo

SOMETHING FOR THE JUNIORS...



star music
C bells tree
DRB
ESREK
CANDLES
OWNOILLZW
GWKSV lights snowman
KEMTREE candles
WQLAMUSIC
CHIMNEYYOU E
NIWDLRP decorate toys
SJSLEIGHF
BIRTHDAYWRV santa
PVXXLEINDEER
NBEUCPALG mistletoe
LCCTJOLLYFD presents
JJUJOPRESENTS
COOKIESANDMILKE cookies and milk
YLIGHTSANTA
RPSTDOETOYSYR shopping
GUADBUPAAZDFTSC
XHBRRZD PYRS GSDMGN
IHI birthday
NYI
GQR

BURC knitters

14 BRENTWOOD URC - *The COURIER* – Dec.14/Jan.15

The dates for our December and January meetings are:

3rd December 2014

17th December 2014

7th January 2015

21st January 2015



All meetings are held in the William Hunter Room , starting at 2pm. Please come if you would like to. All are welcome.

Muriel Cantor

Monday Guild

Our meeting on 13th October was led by Jim Stratford when he entertained us with music from his CD collection. We heard some of his favourites, old and new, finishing with some birdsong. Thank you Jim, for an enjoyable afternoon.

On Monday, 10th November Dr. Mary Tate was our speaker. She spoke about a holiday which she and her husband Norman had had a few years ago in Chile. Mary illustrated her talk with some varied and exciting colour slides showing us the country from the mountainous area in the North to the less hilly but much colder regions in the South where we saw some colonies of penguins. Our thanks to Mary for an interesting talk and another enjoyable afternoon.

Our Christmas meeting will be on Monday, 8th December

at 2.30 p.m. and will be led by Margaret and Tony Cheer.

Margaret Cheer

Sacred Space is now every Thursday morning, from 9.30 - 10am (apart from Christmas Day and New Year's Day). However, if it suits you to slip in just for a while at any point during that half hour that also is fine.

Sheila Maxey

Report from the Church Treasurer

Below is a report of the Sunday collections for September and October 2014 with a comparison for the weekly average in 2013.

	Envelopes	Loose	TOTAL
Total for 2013	7,985.65	1,629.91	9,615.56
Weekly Av for 2013	153.57	31.34	184.91
Total Sept	542.00	104.70	646.70
Av weekly Sept	135.50	26.18	161.68
Total Oct	619.10	90.24	709.34
Av weekly Oct	154.78	22.56	177.34

As can be seen the averages are mostly a bit below the previous year. There are also the contributions made by

Standing Order directly into our account which are not covered in the above analysis.

This year has been a year which has had significantly lower outgoings compared to last year. This is because we have not had a minister - and consequently we have not had manse expenses. This will change next year. We have had a major expenditure in the replacement of the organ blower - which has come to £4,080. For this we have got a much quieter blower. We have received two generous donations of a total of £200 towards its cost.

Kees Maxey

Church Treasurer

DUTY ROTAS – DECEMBER 2014

	Flowers	Vestibule
7th	Mary Tate	Rosalie Brentnall
14th	Christmas Team	Muriel Cantor
21st	Christmas Team	Jim Stratford
28th	Patricia Benham	Mary Tate

	Vestry	Steward	Notices
7th	Bill Crisp	Mary Tate	Steve Burns
14th	Mary Tate	Rosalie Brentnall	Rosalie Brentnall
21st	Ian Davidson	Jenny Mayo	The Cheers
28th	Rosalie Brentnall	Stuart Crowther	Stan Francis

	Reader	Prayers of Intercession
7th	Rosalie Brentnall	Margaret Gazely
14th	Kees Maxey	Jim Bealey
21st	Charles Steynor	Kees Maxey
28th	Mary Tate	Ian Davidson

	Coffee
7th	Sheila Crisp
14th	Eileen Goult
21st	Gillian Tytherleigh
28th	Margaret Gazely

CHURCH CALENDAR – DECEMBER 2014

Monday	1st	7.30 pm	Elders Meeting
Wednesday	3rd	2 pm	URC Knitters
Thursday	4th	9.30 am	Sacred Space
Sunday	7th	10 am	Mrs Amanda Dolan-Harrison
Monday	8th	2.30 pm	Monday Guild
Wednesday	10th	11.45 am	20 minute Christmas Worship – before the Lunch Club Christmas Lunch
Thursday	11th	9.30 am	Sacred Space
Friday	12th	6 pm	Decorating the church,

followed by a
"Take Away" Supper

Sunday	14th	10 am	Toy and Gift Service with Holy Communion led by Revd. Ruth Mitchell
Wednesday	17th	2 pm	URC Knitters
Thursday	18th	9.30 am	Sacred Space
Friday	19th	9.45 am 6.30 pm	Coffee Shop Christmas CELEBRATION – to be confirmed.
Sunday	21st	10 am 6.30 pm	Revd Colin Hunt Carol Service
Wednesday	24 th	11.15 pm	Christmas Eve Holy Communion – Revd. Sheila Maxey
Thursday	25 th	10 am	Christmas Day Worship at Brentwood Methodist Church
Sunday	28th	10 am	To be confirmed



	Flowers	Vestibule
4th	Elaine Austin	Stan Francis
11th	Rosalie Brentnall	Patricia Benham
18th	Eileen Goult	Jenny Mayo
25th	Tina Farmer	Carolyn Rudkin

	Vestry	Steward	Notices
4th	Patricia Benham	Gillian Tytherleigh	Steve Burns
11th	Stan Francis	Clive Rudkin	Rosalie Brentnall
18th	Moses Tsingano	Sheila Maxey	The Cheers
25th	Gillian Tytherleigh	Stan Francis	Stan Francis

	Reader	Prayers of Intercession
4th	Clive Rudkin	Clive Rudkin
11th	Linda Hanna	The Cheers
18th	Jenny Mayo	Jenny Mayo
25th	Stan Francis	

	Coffee
4th	Rosalie Brentnall
11th	Patricia Benham
18th	Sally Bealey
25th	Mary Tate

CHURCH CALENDAR – JANUARY 2015

Sunday	4th	10 am	To be confirmed
Wednesday	7th	2 pm	URC Knitters
Thursday	8th	9.30 am	Sacred Space
Sunday	11th	10 am	Mrs Beryl Hunt
Monday	12th	2.30 pm	Monday Guild
Thursday	15th	9.30 am	Sacred Space
Sunday	18th	10 am	Revd. Colin Hunt
Wednesday	21st	2 pm	URC Knitters
Thursday	22nd	9.30 am	Sacred Space
Sunday	25th	10 am	Revd. Ruth Mitchell – with Holy Communion. A Joint Service with Brentwood Methodist Church
Thursday	29th	9.30 am	Sacred Space

Prayer Calendar for December and January

Week beginning:

December 7th People in need in the Inner Cities (Gift Service next Sunday)
The Wednesday Lunch Club (Christmas meal this Wednesday)
The retail sector and its employees

- December 14th The 5th Brentwood Brownies
Coffee Shop (Christmas Event on Friday)
Homeless people and organisations which help them.
- December 21st The worldwide church as it celebrates
Christmas.
Children and families known to us
People who are under stress at Christmas
- December 28th The life and mission of this church in 2015
Elders and other leaders in our church
Those who are persecuted for their faith.

2015

- January 4th Peace in the world and those trying to promote
it.
Prisoners and the Prison Service
BSCWT and its work in schools
- January 11th Justice in international trade
People who are suffering from economic
hardship.
Hirers of our building
- January 18th Christian Unity (Week of prayer for unity
begins today)
Churches Together in Brentwood
Refugees and Asylum Seekers
- January 25th The financial sector and its employees
Students and colleges

SUNDAY WORSHIP

10:00 am Family Worship with Creche and Junior Church

Holy Communion is usually celebrated at Morning Worship on the last Sunday of each month.

Details of preachers and special events are given in the COURIER.

EACH WEEK:

Brownies: Contact Jane Gutteridge 01245 266933

WEDNESDAYS: 12:00pm Luncheon Club

FRIDAYS: 09:45am – 11:45am Coffee Shop
12:00pm - 01:00pm Christian Aid Lunch
01:00pm – 01:30pm Ecumenical Prayers

