

News & Views

June 2025



Elmers End Free Church

Goddard Road, Elmers End,
Beckenham, Kent BR3 4AE

Website : www.elmersendchurch.org.uk

Minister

We are without a Minister for the time being.

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Services

The Sunday service is at 11.00 a.m.

Holy Communion is usually held in the morning of the 3rd Sunday of the month.

Elmers End Free Church is a member of Churches Together in Beckenham

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Weekly Activities

Brownie Guides

Monday 6.30 p.m.

Leader : Miss Katherine Bayley

Email : 16thbeckenhambrownies@live.co.uk

Langley Pre-School

Tuesday-Friday

Please contact Mrs Jenny Jupp

Tel : 020 8402 8320

Email : langleypreschool@hotmail.com

Flamenco

Tuesday 7.30 p.m. Saturday 2.30 p.m.

Leader Mrs Juani Garcia

Email : flamenco@talktalk.net

Weddings, Funerals and Baptisms

Please contact the Secretary

SERVICES IN JUNE

- 1st 11.00 Morning Service led by Martin Fosten*
Organist : Peter Dowling
- 8th 11.00 Morning Service led by Stephen Fellingham*
Organist : Stephen Davies
- 15th 11.00 Morning Service led by Rev. Bryn Thomas
including Holy Communion
Organist : Peter Dowling
The Service will be followed by light refreshments
- 22nd 11.00 Morning Service led by Jo Patterson*
Organist : Stephen Davies
To be followed by a discussion with Jo – all welcome
- 29th 11.00 Morning Service led by Laura McBean*
Organist : Peter Dowling

SERVICES IN EARLY JULY

- 6th 11.00 Morning Service led by Rev. Dr. Elaine Colechin*
Organist : To be confirmed
- 13th 11.00 Morning Service led by Clive Timehin*
Organist : To be confirmed

- *Martin Fosten is from Christ Church Petts Wood
 - *Stephen Fellingham is from Bromley URC
 - *Jo Patterson is the Synod Mission & Discipleship Officer
 - *Laura McBean is from the Bromley Methodist Circuit
 - *Elaine Colechin is the Minister of Bromley URC
 - *Clive Timehin is from the Bromley Methodist Circuit
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JULY/AUGUST NEWS AND VIEWS

Any articles or news for the next edition should be with me by Sunday 22 June. They can be handed to me or my daughter Katherine or sent to me Anthony



PASTORAL LETTER

Dear Friends.

I became a Guider in what was then The Guide Association in 1980, mainly because the then Brownie Guider at Beckenham URC needed the Guide Company to be re-opened for her Brownies to attend. Now, I was never a Brownie or Guide myself and so, while training for this role, I found myself at my first Guide Camp. One of my jobs was to help with burning rubbish and I very quickly realised how beautiful yet deadly fire is - the shapes & colours of the flames; the speed of burning the rubbish; the warmth; even the glow of the embers

- I think I could easily become an arsonist! The other thing that is fascinating is the effect even a slight breeze can have on a fire. It stirs up the material to be burned and fans the flames to new intensity. Of course, the stronger the wind the faster and fiercer the flames burn.

The first week of September 1998 found Anthony & I on holiday with our friends Gill and Alan. We were in Ireland staying in a cottage near Killarney, County Kerry. Alan owned his own film company, writing and directing corporate videos and documentaries - including one made during the filming of "Ryan's Daughter". Most of this took place in the area where we were staying and Alan was keen to find the sites used in the film. Unfortunately, on the first day we set out to do this, the remains of a hurricane had swept across the Atlantic and hit the South West corner of Ireland! We stopped at one viewpoint, had trouble opening the car doors and Gill & I ended up clinging on to each other - unable to breathe or move - in fear of being blown away! It was truly terrifying! Needless to

say we abandoned the search that day and took refuge in a pub! We did find everything later in the holiday once the wind had calmed down.

On the day of Pentecost that we read about in Chapter 2 of the Acts of the Apostles, we find the disciples still hiding in the Upper Room, frightened to go out and they encounter these two forces of nature - wind and fire. The wind bursts open the door, blows in the windows and sweeps out all the staleness, all the rubbish in the room, cleansing and refreshing the atmosphere. Then tongues of fire appear above their heads and they feel its power burning up their fear and doubt and inertia. They feel the warmth of God's Holy Spirit - the Comforter promised by Jesus at the Last Supper in this very room. They are filled with courage and determination; with eagerness to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with everyone. And then the wind sweeps them out of the room and onto the streets of Jerusalem, able to speak about Jesus in ways everyone can understand - and 3,000 people come to faith on that first day alone! **THE CHURCH IS BORN!!**

Pentecost is one of the three most important feasts of the Christian calendar and yet it is the most understated and least celebrated - and probably the most misunderstood! Yet on that first Pentecost, 11 + men (and possibly women) were cleansed, anointed and propelled into action. The Holy Spirit of God and Jesus totally transformed their lives. The power and grace of God made it possible for all those who heard them speak to understand what they were saying. We have to stop limiting the power of God to what we believe is possible. We also have to stop referring to the Holy Spirit as 'it'. The Holy Spirit is person - overflowing with joy and strength and wisdom. The Holy Spirit makes it possible for each of us to have a relationship with God and empowers us to share that with others. We can feel the cleansing, warmth and energy of the fire - the refreshing and empowering wind. It may not be as overpowering a feeling as for the first recipients but this can be ours.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if everyone who comes to Christian worship - wherever that may be - on Pentecost Sunday (8th June) was blown out of

church into the street, singing and praising God?! What a difference it would make to our world today!

God bless you all.

Marion

WORDS OF WISDOM

Luke's last chapter – Ascension – Emphasis on Scripture

Our exploration of Luke's angle on Jesus started with Christmas (angels appearing to poor shepherds, birth in a manger, priestly family of forerunner John the Baptist, the theory developed during the first century of conception by the Holy Spirit); continued to Good Friday (understanding of sleepy disciples, forgiveness of the repentant thief, last words serene the 'Into your hands I commit my spirit' unlike Mark); and brought us to Easter (apparently inconsistent accounts, the only gospel to tell the tantalising Emmaus journey, best focus not on 'what sort of body?' so much as on the fact that so many followers claimed to have experienced his appearing to them).

It is a fascinating story, immensely rich in detail and thoroughly thought-provoking. Now Luke adds at the very end of the Gospel his single sentence about Jesus being 'taken up' – what we call 'The Ascension'. It inevitably in our minds brings the focus back to the 'what sort of body?' conundrum, which we can summarise as having three variations:

1. A solid body just as it had been at the Last Supper (in which case, however could it dematerialise into the clouds as mentioned in Acts 1, or vanish as at Emmaus? And why did he not continue his ministry when injuries healed?)
2. A different sort of 'body' that was not flesh-and-bone, but unique to the risen Jesus. Or:
3. A story that had grown up during the first century, which Luke includes

among others because he needed to see Jesus away from the earth's surface (the appearances had ceased) and deeply desired to show Jesus 'exalted' alongside his Father-Creator. This account could be less fact and more the spiritually acute speculation of people who understood the direction in which the faith was to go, i.e. passing the whole Jesus-ness over to us, his followers.

At the empty tomb with the two angels-in-white, in the Emmaus story and in the 'I'm no ghost' appearance to disciples, Luke repeatedly features references to scripture, even precisely mentioning the Law (Pentateuch), the Psalms (Writings) and the Prophets i.e. the whole Hebrew Bible. Why? Because he wants to give Jesus (not just the carpenter's son?) the high status of being mentioned in scripture: nobody could argue with that!

We should take care, because our high respect for the Bible was not paralleled in Jesus' time – its details were much more open to argument and interpretation. Isaiah 53 is for us the easiest example – 'he was despised, rejected ... by his stripes we are healed etc' – clear indications that the words can be applied to the final dreadful hours of Jesus' life. They argued this even though they knew the passage referred to a previous situation of Israel and that the tense was past not future. For them, their Bible text was open to interpretation – what more could they want to prove the specialness of Jesus?

That brings to a close our exploration of Luke's angle on the main waymarks in his Life of Jesus. The story is not over, because Luke uniquely continues the story of the early church in Acts, beginning with a new disciple to bring the number back to twelve, and the excitement of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost – for which, as we have learned already, the disciples are charged to remain in Jerusalem. Finally, when we have covered that, we can explore further unique aspects of Luke's Gospel, like the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son and the differing beatitudes. Luke will continue to amaze for a bit longer...

Bryn

NEWS OF THE CHURCH FAMILY & PRAYER POINTERS

Our Church Prayer List

Please pray for healing and hope for those experiencing joys or heartaches in life's rich journey, including those who are feeling housebound, in hospital or receiving care, remembering particularly

- Marion
- Jack & Pat and their family
- Chris who has just survived a 'hit and run' with severe bruising rather than broken bones we believe.
- Jeanette
- Anne
- Andy and his mother & stepfather

Internationally

Continue to remember nations and people afflicted by war and violence, including the people of Ukraine, Israel, Gaza and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and Lebanon, praying that the current on/off peace negotiations in both areas may bring peace and vital justice for each nation or community. Sadly, let us not forget other areas where violence is commonplace. Sudan and Myanmar(Burma) spring immediately to mind.

THIS MONTH'S QUESTION

Who said "I keep my ideals, because in spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart"?

Answer on Page 15

WHERE IS THIS?

Last month we were on the beautiful island of Jersey. Do you remember the classic series ‘Bergerac’? The detective on the island drove around in the famous car shown in the photo. Even if you never saw the series, a close look at the car’s number plate would have given you the answer. So where are we this month? A bit nearer home this time.

Anthony

MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES

(The church’s charity for 2025)

This month a report from Gaza

A burn injury is more than just a wound – it is a prolonged sentence of suffering, and this is even more so in Gaza, Palestine. Many people have extensive burns covering large portions of their bodies – some people have as much as 40 per cent of their total body surface burned.

After over 19 months of attacks by Israeli forces that have decimated Gaza’s healthcare system, patients suffering burns from bomb explosions and improvised cooking methods are left with few options for care. As Israeli authorities maintain the siege on Gaza, blocking access to basic aid, medical and life-saving supplies, many patients are left to endure excruciating pain with limited or no relief.

In August 2024, 17-year-old Tayseer Mansour was badly burned all over his body in an Israeli strike that hit his house, killing his mother and injuring himself, his father and brothers. He is being treated by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) teams at Nasser hospital in Khan Younis, southern Gaza.

“I was severely injured with third degree burns. I’ve been in the inpatient department for more than 150 days now. I can’t move my hands anymore, it’s very painful,” says Mansour. “I can’t eat on my own or do much of anything else. This has had a big impact on me. I hope I will recover.”

Since May 2024, MSF teams working in Nasser hospital have provided over 1,000 surgical operations to burn patients, 70 per cent of which have been children, most under the age of five. Many of these children were

burned by bomb blasts and others by boiling water or fuel used for cooking or heating in makeshift shelters.

Severe burns require complex and long-term care, including multiple surgeries, daily wound dressing changes, physiotherapy, pain management, psychological support, and a sterile environment to prevent infection. However, after 50 days of no supplies entering Gaza due to the blockade, MSF teams are running low on even basic painkillers, leaving patients without adequate pain relief. At the same time, since the beginning of the war, only very few surgeons in Gaza have the ability to manage complex burn care plastic surgery.

WHY DID THE NEW POPE TAKE THE NAME OF ‘LEO’?

Cardinal Robert Prevost, like his predecessors, took, on election, a papal name different from his birth name. Why did he choose ‘Leo’? Why not, for example, ‘Francis II’ if he admired Pope Francis?

Does he want to project the qualities of a lion (‘leo’ in Latin)? No. The reason is that he sees himself as following in the footsteps of a previous Leo: Pope Leo XIII (1810 – 1903) who was head of the Catholic Church from 1878 until his death in 1903. His dates are comparable to Queen Victoria’s (1819 – 1901).

He was known for defining the position of the Catholic Church with regard to modern thinking. In his 1891 encyclical *Rerum novarum* (‘Of New Things’), Pope Leo XIII outlined the rights of workers to a fair wage, safe working conditions and the formation of trade unions, while affirming the rights to property and free enterprise, opposing both socialism and *laissez-faire* capitalism. He became popularly called the ‘Social Pope’ and the ‘Pope of the Workers’, also having created the foundations for modern thinking in the social doctrines of the Catholic Church, influencing his successors.

That Leo was Pope during a time of great social change in the last quarter of the 19th century, when my grandfathers were born. The new Pope Leo is aware of big changes in the world, like AI and the diminishing role in many countries of democracy as we have known it since 1945. During such social, political and economic change, he hopes to lead the Catholic Church in asserting Christian values in a powerful way, especially to promote peace.

I may write about popes, but no, I am not a secret catholic! There is much in catholic belief that I can never hold, like papal infallibility, their understanding of communion and their refusal to ordain women as priests. But our world needs strong Christian leadership to counterbalance dominant influences from China, Russia and America. Our Reformed tradition is not hierarchical, so does not bring to prominence any particular leader, recognised world-wide as a person of significance. Perhaps this Pope will provide the leadership that Christianity needs just now: can we pray for this to happen? *Bryn*

(Much of the above, especially para 3, derives from the Wikipedia article on Leo XIII.)

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

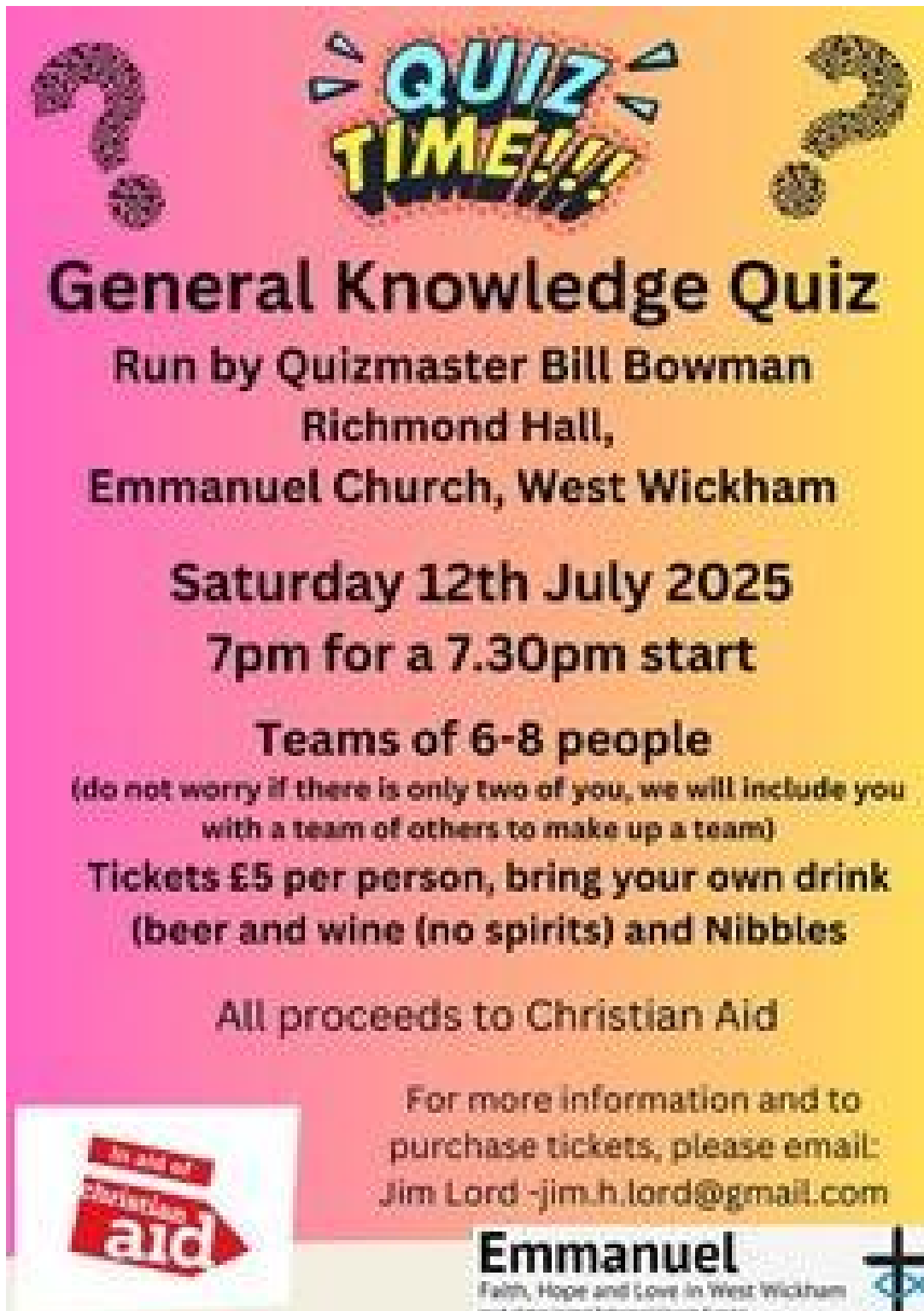
Please note Nick Comfort's new address

Eels were a delicacy in ancient Rome so the rich and powerful kept ponds to ensure a ready supply. The statesman and orator Lucius Crassus, however, kept a pet eel that he would dress in earrings and necklaces.

CHRISTIAN AID QUIZ AT EMMANUEL

It would be good to get a team together from EEFC. Please let me know if you are interested.

Anthony



A colorful poster for a 'Quiz Time!!!' event. The background is a gradient from pink to yellow. At the top, the words 'QUIZ TIME!!!' are written in a large, stylized, bubbly font. Above the text are two large, pixelated question marks. Below the title, the text 'General Knowledge Quiz' is written in a bold, black font. This is followed by 'Run by Quizmaster Bill Bowman', 'Richmond Hall,', and 'Emmanuel Church, West Wickham'. The date 'Saturday 12th July 2025' and time '7pm for a 7.30pm start' are listed. It specifies 'Teams of 6-8 people' and includes a note: '(do not worry if there is only two of you, we will include you with a team of others to make up a team)'. Ticket information states 'Tickets £5 per person, bring your own drink (beer and wine (no spirits) and Nibbles)'. It also says 'All proceeds to Christian Aid'. At the bottom left is the Christian Aid logo, and at the bottom right is the Emmanuel church logo with the text 'Emmanuel Faith, Hope and Love in West Wickham' and 'most of the money raised goes to help people in need'.

Quiz Time!!!

General Knowledge Quiz

Run by Quizmaster Bill Bowman
Richmond Hall,
Emmanuel Church, West Wickham

Saturday 12th July 2025
7pm for a 7.30pm start

Teams of 6-8 people
(do not worry if there is only two of you, we will include you with a team of others to make up a team)


Tickets £5 per person, bring your own drink
(beer and wine (no spirits) and Nibbles

All proceeds to Christian Aid

For more information and to purchase tickets, please email:
Jim Lord - jim.h.lord@gmail.com

Christian aid

Emmanuel
Faith, Hope and Love in West Wickham
most of the money raised goes to help people in need



Grief is hard.
Death can impact
all of life.

The Bereavement
Journey
a place to talk

7 Sessions of films
and discussion
for *anyone* bereaved *anytime*

The Bereavement Journey
Christ Church Beckenham, Main Hall,
Fairfield Road, Beckenham BR3 3LE

Mondays 2pm - 4pm:
2nd 9th 16th 23rd 30th June, 7th 14th July.

Please contact Helen on:
020 8650 3847 / office@ccb.org.uk
or scan the QR code for information and booking.

 **CHRIST CHURCH
BECKENHAM**



PHOTOS

All photos this month are thanks to Anthony (page 23 bottom), Pixabay (page 1), Philip (page 24), Nick (page 23 top).

FOODBANK

Most Wanted List:

Below is the list of items particularly requested from the Foodbank:

Small Jars of Coffee

Tinned Tomatoes

Multi Surface Sprays/Wipes

Bleach

Men's Deodorant

Please do not feel under any obligation to donate to the foodbank. All items small or large are greatly appreciated to help those in need in the Bromley borough.

Thank you.

Sylvia



Certificate of Thanks

This Certificate is presented to all those who have donated to Bromley Borough Foodbank:	Elmers End Free Church
Date of donations:	March-April
Donations given to help support the work of Bromley Borough Foodbank:	31kg

With our Grateful Thanks

ANSWER TO THIS MONTH'S QUESTION

Anne Frank

(who died in a concentration camp in 1945 and whose diary was famously published subsequently by her father – the only member of her family to survive)

ORIGINS OF WELL KNOWN EXPRESSIONS

PUT A SOCK IN IT

This plea to be quiet originates in the late 19th Century and refers not to loud talkers but to early gramophones. These primitive devices had no volume control so a convenient method of reducing their noise was to stuff a woollen sock into the horn shaped amplifier

CHURCH A.G.M. 11 MAY 2025

SECRETARY'S REPORT

The past year has seen plenty of activity at EEFC, both before and after David Pickering's retirement as our Minister which we marked with a presentation to David and Jan. Much of that activity has been public, from David's baptism of four new members by total immersion in November to yesterday evening's Desert Island Discs with Bromley URC's the Rev Elaine Colechin, who now has a watching brief over us. We owe special thanks to Bryn, her interviewer, for leading Holy Communion here during the current vacancy. Thanks also to David J. for his invaluable work as my predecessor as church secretary, and for his continued activity. The two of us have been going through the files in the Vestry, and there's more to be

done. My biggest discovery so far has been the alternative original plan for our Sanctuary, which seems to have come straight out of a Noddy book. I must also thank all the Elders for helping me get my head round the complexities of this job; somebody clearly thought I didn't have enough to do.

Throughout his ministry with us, David encouraged the Elders to prepare to take charge of the running of our church. In this, we have been helped by the URCs in Bromley coming together to overcome the shortage of ministers, which is seeing church secretaries exchange information and magazines and an increasing number of joint events. Elaine Colechin has been overseeing this, with wisdom and encouragement. And one early fruit of this greater co-operation is that EEFC will be hosting next year's Maundy Thursday Holy Communion for churches across the borough, following this year's successful service at Hayes Free Church.

Shortly after David Pickering's departure, the Elders held a cards-on-the-table meeting with Synod. We knew we had to do something about our building, and we were anxious to prove that we have a future by engaging with the wider local community. But we were surprised to come away with the realisation that it had been a very long time since we thought seriously about how we worship. We were faced with questions like: Does every service have to be a hymn sandwich? Do we focus enough on prayer? Can we bring greater variety to our music? And above all, how can we make our services more welcoming?

You may have noticed the odd tweak as Anthony has of necessity brought in a wider range of preachers, but this is a matter for our congregation as a whole. On June 22 the Rev Jo Patterson, Synod's mission and discipleship officer, is taking our service, and she's kindly agreed to stay on afterwards so we can talk through over a cup of tea ways of making our services more relevant. I do hope as many of us as possible will join in – it should last an hour at most.

In concert with Jo, we have also been looking at modest ways of making our church more outgoing. Thanks to Elizabeth's son Jack, our cross window is once again illuminated after dark. We are looking at ways of making it brighter. Philip has breathed new life into our website. We are updating the noticeboards outside both ends of our church. We now give out our Elmers End Prayer sheet with the hymn books instead of leaving people to grub around for it, and we shall soon be reworking it to include the Lord's Prayer. It would be wrong for us to assume that everyone knows it by heart these days. We're also hoping to have a lemonade stall outside for a day or two in July.

We've been in touch with a number of charity and community groups to see what we can offer them, and vice versa. Elaine Colechin is already working with some of them in ways that could benefit us, but these contacts have thrown up a number of small grants we could apply for, for visual aids perhaps. In addition David Pickering asked at his last meeting with the Churches Together In Beckenham clergy if any other church might be interested in using our premises, and got an immediate Yes from the Redeemed Christian Church of God, who now worship in the Beckenham Public Hall. I've attended one of their services, receiving a very warm welcome, and I have had a further meeting with Pastor Ojo and his wife. Synod have also, very helpfully, given us the draft of a rental agreement if we were able to come to an arrangement. Frankly the Elders are not sure whether it would work, particularly as they worship at the same time on a Sunday and are louder than us. But we are ready to explore the possibilities, and will be meeting their leaders here on June 3.

We also engaged with the London Fire Brigade to make sure our fire precautions and evacuation procedures are fit for purpose. Not surprisingly, we were told we needed to do more. We're going to make the door into the Centenary Garden an escape route and stop designating the door toward the boiler room as a fire exit. We've also put an air horn under the Communion table, for use if fire breaks out during a service. And at

some point soon we're going to surprise you during a service with a fire drill.

Finally, there's our building. For a start, there has been a steady stream of repairs needing to be done, most of them to the hall end of the building. Our thanks to Sylvia for bringing in Cliff Bashford to put things right. We did notice one leaky crack in the Sanctuary wall that worried us and called in a structural engineer; fortunately he found that the structure is basically sound.

The last church meeting authorized us to take further steps with Synod and the architects to firm up detailed plans and map out a path to making it happen.

I have met with Jenny and Nikki from the preschool to let them know we are contemplating major building works, and may need to use the hall for worship while those are under way.

As for the plans themselves, we were told that the architects would get back to us with a final draft by the end of June. In the event, they did it much quicker, in time for Elders on 30 April. Acting as authorized by the last Church Meeting, we looked at the plans, liked what we saw and asked the architects to recommend a quantity surveyor to cost the works. We've just accepted an estimate from one to do the job, and he'll be holding a site meeting shortly with us and the architect.

I've printed out the latest version of the plans, and have some copies here. The main change from the ones you've already seen is that they would bring forward the wall at the back of the Sanctuary to be level with the front of the balcony, creating room for a more welcoming entrance, a small office and extra storage. The new toilets, kitchen and meeting room – large enough for worship on a cold Sunday in mid winter – would take up the present cloisters and a small extension into the Centenary Garden without encroaching on the Sanctuary.

Nick Comfort

TREASURER'S REPORT

Whilst our balance sheet remains healthy our expenditure over the 2024 calendar year exceeded the income we received.

Donations we received over 2024 were slightly below those from the prior year. We received donations during the year for outside charities being Kampala Kids Club and St Christopher's Hospice; these totalled £485. Our charity for 2025 is Doctors Without Borders.

Our income from lettings was also slightly down from 2023.

Our largest expenses relate to maintenance and repairs to our buildings although some of the Synod grant we received in 2024 provided an offset to that. The renovation project planning costs were fully covered by the Synod grant we received.

The difference in our contribution to URC Ministry and Missions relates to 2 items; one is that the 2023 year had one less monthly payment and the 2024 year saw an additional contribution request from URC to support a specific shortfall they were seeing in their finances at Synod level.

Whilst our finances in aggregate remain good, we do need to be careful moving forward to ensure that our spend on maintenance remains value for money. We expect to need to contribute a significant portion of our reserve account assets towards the renovation costs.

The accrued amount at year end that had not yet been paid to the outside charities has now been forwarded to the relevant charities. The remaining outstanding amount relates to a prior year where we receive donations from Eunice's funeral, and it is unclear which charity the family wished those donations to be sent to. I seek the church memberships input whether they recall which charity that may have been or if there is a charity, you're aware of that Eunice would have been happy for us to support.

Anne S.

BROWNIES REPORT

The Brownies had lots of fun during 2024 with the usual games, craft and following the Girlguiding programme.

We built up skills by learning different and effective communication, using other ways than voice, for example mime, dancing emojis and sign language.

By popular demand we repeated the activity 'room in a box' where the girls use all sorts of materials to decorate and create items to make a room inside a box. Another Unit Meeting Activity was called 'Brownie bots' when the girls explored computer programming.

Random activities included making cakes in an air fryer, hide and seek in the dark, riddles (they went through a phase) Hangman race and stickman (they had to draw on stickmen pictures to make them look like characters for their team to guess). We celebrated some incredible women who came to this country on Windrush and looked at Parliament and rule-making. We had a team building evening when the Brownies worked in different teams to complete a variety of activities such as rescuing a worm and making something out of limited resources.

We celebrated World Thinking Day in February with an evening looking at how we can reduce our carbon footprints and be climate change superheroes.

Leading up to summer, we travelled the globe with an evening in each continent. We made passports and stuck in a picture for each country we visited. We played Flamingos in Senegal and made origami South African penguins. The next week we weaved Persian rugs in Iran and then learnt Bollywood dancing in India. The Americas came next with a sporting theme, playing ice hockey in Canada and Football in Brazil. In Australia the Brownies created a new animal and built boats in New Zealand. We sailed the boats on a voyage to Antarctica (otherwise known as the Harvinton woods) where it was not snowing but the girls certainly got

wet in the river and with the rain. We finished in Europe holding our own version of the Olympics.

For Christmas we played traditional games and participated in an escape room type quiz. We also did a sock swap. The girls took home a sock and filled it with a present and then we played a Christmas left right story and they each had a present to take home.

Trips out in 2024 were once again 10-pin bowling in Bromley, Golf at Langley Park golf club, 2 outings to Beckenham Odeon to see Inside out 2 and Moana 2 with other members of Girlguiding and the Panto in West Wickham. Plus the soggy, but lots of fun, trip to Harvington.

The Brownies, Lisa, Paula and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Church for its help and encouragement over the year. We enjoy coming to Church Parades and feel very fortunate to meet in such a supportive Church.

Katherine B.

THE MOUSE

I am a mouse and I live in a house
That's tiny and wee, like me.
I mean you no harm, so don't jump with alarm
When a glimpse of me you see.

I am really quite sweet but I truly must eat
If I don't, like you, I would die.
So please think of my tum, and spare me a crumb
And not to nibble your food I will try.

I know I leave droppings all over the place,
If you were me, you would too.
For I live in a house, barely fit for a mouse,
It most certainly does not have a loo.

But you hate me I fear, though I'm really a dear,
Warm and furry and kind.
You set a trap whose spring goes snap,
My broken bones don't enter your mind.

You leave poison as well, so my innards will swell,
And in great pain I will lie,
But you don't care a jot, and think of me not,
As writhing in agony I die.

Then there's the cat, have you thought about that,
It waits and pounces with glee
For ages it torments, my poor body it rents,
With claws, just like swords to me.

So have a heart, and spare a thought,
For poor little helpless me.
I want to live my life without worry and strife,
Like you, I want to be free

Jeanette Owens (Comfort)

DESERT ISLAND DISCS

On Saturday 10 May a group of almost 30 people, mostly from Elmers End and Emmanuel West Wickham Churches, met in the large hall at Elmers End Church. They had met to see & hear Rev. Dr. Elaine Colechin interviewed by Rev. Bryn Thomas and learn more about Elaine's story. However, we started by tucking in to a tasty fish & chips meal brought in from a local shop. Feeling suitably full, we settled down to the fascinating story of Elaine's life through Bryn's helpful questioning. At regular intervals we had Elaine's 8 disc choices which were both enjoyable and varied. A truly enjoyable evening and sincere thanks particularly to Elaine & Bryn and also to those who helped get everything ready and cleared up afterwards. The fish & chips broke even and we had a raffle which raised £104 for our charity Medecins sans Frontieres.



WILDLIFE

We've been a little short on wildlife pictures since David's departure so I thought I would share this with you. It shows seals floating on pieces of ice broken off from a nearby glacier on the coast of Alaska. How many can you see? I can count at least 14.

Anthony





Blue and white bluebells but are they Spanish, British or a hybrid.

I think Philip knows the answer. I certainly don't.

WHERE IS THIS?

