

News & Views

October 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 on 07979 958753

PHOTOS

All photos this month are thanks to Anthony (page 16 bottom) , Unsplash (page 1), Elizabeth & Simon (page 12), Tom & Megan (page 15) and Philip (page 16 top).

SERVICES IN OCTOBER

- 5th 11.00 Morning Service led by Janet Godden*
Organist : Peter Dowling
- 12th 11.00 Morning Service led by Martin Leonard*
Organist : Peter Dowling
- 19th 11.00 Morning Service led by Rev. Bryn Thomas
Including Holy Communion
Organist : Peter Dowling
The service will be followed by light refreshments
- 26th 11.00 Morning Service led by June Mackenzie*
Organist : Peter Dowling

SERVICES IN EARLY NOVEMBER

- 2nd 11.00 Morning Service led by Sue Thomas*
Organist : Peter Dowling
- 9th **10.45** Remembrance Sunday Morning Service
led by Anthony & Katherine Bayley
Organist : Peter Dowling

*Janet Godden is from St. John's URC Orpington

*Martin Leonard is from Christ Church URC Petts Wood

*June Mackenzie is from St. George's Beckenham

*Sue Thomas is, of course, from Emmanuel West Wickham

Tired of political corruption 100,000 citizens of Sao Paulo in Brazil voted for a female black rhinoceros named Cacareco for their city council in 1958. Although she won more votes than the other candidates election officials ruled her to be ineligible



PASTORAL LETTER

I have recently realised that it is the 50th anniversary of my father's death. The family all knew he wasn't well but had no idea that he was dying. We all met up for a family get together at my brother's house on the Sunday and on Monday I got a phone call at work to say he had died. I travelled home in a daze.

He was a lovely man and I am proud to have been told that I take after him rather than my mother who was a somewhat difficult lady. He was a lifelong Christian, a lay preacher, a church treasurer, a banker and someone you could always talk to. During the war he served in the Royal Navy spending periods of time in Egypt and the USA. Only in recent years have I discovered that he was serving on a large infantry landing ship on D Day. Like so many others, he never talked about that part of his war experiences.

He was a gentle man, who never raised his voice. One of my greatest regrets in life is that Katherine never knew him. He died shortly before she was born. Nevertheless, we all have people we can look up to even if not family. Nelson Mandela, Winston Churchill, Mother Theresa. I could go on and on but I won't. We would all make different choices. However, there is one person we can all look at and try to emulate and that is, of course, Jesus Christ. Who better could we try to follow? My father did throughout his life so I have the best of all worlds.

Anthony

WORDS OF WISDOM

A Brief Look at the New Testament's Mastermind St Paul

A theme for the Season of Creation

Creation brought to a state of peace

*An encouraging suggestion: the following makes better sense if you find a Bible and turn to Paul's Letter to the **Romans ch8 vv18-25** – only 8 verses!*

The original meaning of the word 'redemption' is liberation – freeing up. It is how a slave felt when bought out of slavery. It is first and foremost a *knowing and a feeling*, that all is well and that there is no need for some awful pall of guilt to hang over us. It's like a great weight being lifted from our shoulders. Then, it is a truth about God: the way God releases us from the burden of realising that we constantly get things wrong.

Christians please note: that is a strong theme in the Old Testament, where it IS about a loving, forgiving God as well as about the stern, ethically demanding God of the Ten Commandments.

The New Testament message is even stronger: Paul understands the death of the crucified Christ to be a redeeming sacrifice. In Paul's Jewish experience, the sacrifice of an animal in the Temple was held to have a redemptive, freeing-up effect. In trying to make sense of the apparent failure of the crucifixion, Paul seizes on the death of Jesus as being redemptive in the same way – but, of course, on a much grander, all-encompassing scale. Paul assumes the truth of redemption by the crucified Christ as obvious without explaining it further.

Over the centuries thoughtful clerics have said, 'But we don't actually believe in animal sacrifice...' and have tried to bring the concept into their own age by theorising (let's be brief!) about God needing to satisfy his honour (like a medieval knight), or about God (like a judge) having to condemn, then pardon, erring humans by allowing Jesus to die in their place. The earliest theory was about the Devil requiring satisfaction. We have come to understand that each of these theories has serious faults – BUT we DO know that behind the theories is a forgiving God, however faltering our human explanations may be.

In Paul's Epistle to the Romans (more a treatise than a letter) he presents his thinking on redemption. But in chapter 8 he goes a huge stage further

by applying the redemption concept to the whole of creation. All created life ‘groans’ and will, in God’s good time, be redeemed: what does he mean ‘groans’?? Destructive storms? Drought? Animals eating other animals? Human *bodies* suffering from illness? Hostile seas?

Unexpected unseasonal weather that leads to crop failure?

Our modern response may be to say that nature is not ‘groaning’ – that is how it is – it does not need redeeming – it’s wonderful as it is – whatever is Paul on about? In Paul’s world of 2000 years ago nature felt more untamed and dangerous than it does to us, producing in people fear rather than wonder. Nature was chaotic and out of control – what Paul calls ‘groaning’. He then asserts, without evidence but with unflinching faith, that God will bring the created world into a wondrous state of redeemed peace, just as God had offered humanity redemption through Christ. The first stage in this poetic vision was for creation to ‘witness’ the glorious future that God had planned for humanity. The second stage was his hope that ‘the whole of created life will be rescued from the tyranny of change and decay’.

We can’t help asking what exactly he meant. Then it occurs to me to wonder what he would make of modern medicine? Our observation of galaxy after distant galaxy, and space flight to the nearer parts of the universe? Our understanding of the human body, of chemical reactions, of quantum physics? Computers and AI? Surely he would become less scared of the created world and, instead, be able to react with the wonder that we feel.

Would he then see this (the processes of modern science and technology) as a gift of God? A freeing up of nature ‘from the tyranny of change and decay’? An expression of God’s peace to which God has brought us? I think he might well see it that way. His ‘hope’ that God’s purposes were gradually being fulfilled would be based on real evidence.

Have you noticed over the years how we celebrate the Hymn to Love of 1 Corinthians 13? Given the climax of ‘faith, hope and love’, we make an easy assumption about ‘faith’ (it’s obvious) and tend to forget ‘hope’ just because Paul gives the top place to ‘love’. In this chapter 8 of Romans, ‘hope’ is *the* basis of his thinking. His ‘faith’ is so strong that his ‘hope’ is as near as anyone can get to certainty.

Guiding me in some of these thoughts is the Commentary of Paul’s Epistle to the Romans by the great Congregationalist scholar C H Dodd (who chaired the panel of translators of the New English Bible).

When approaching these eight verses, Dodd summarises the greatness of St Paul, in breadth and depth, in the first half of Romans. Just pause and take in how amazing Paul is:

At this point the argument rises to a new level. We have heard Paul declaiming against the vices of the age like a satirist, speculating on the knowledge of God and the conscience of man like a philosopher, arguing from Scripture like a rabbi and analysing experience like a psychologist. Now he speaks with the vision of a poet.

Bryn

VARIETY SHOW 4 OCTOBER

Please note that this has been postponed until next Spring.

WHERE IS THIS?

Last month we were in Berwick-upon-Tweed. In the centre is the old Town Hall and Jail. Berwick has an amazing history spinning between England & Scotland. There are still suggestions that it should move back to Scotland. When I visited some years back, with my banking background, I noticed that all the banks in town were Scottish. There is a story that Berwick was specified as well as England & Scotland when we declared war on Russia for the Crimean War but was omitted when peace was agreed, thus remaining at war. This is apparently not true. So where are we this month? Quite a bit nearer than Berwick and does it look a little familiar? Have a look on the back page.

Anthony

THIS MONTH'S QUESTION

Which First Lady of the USA hosted the final reunion of the widows of Civil War veterans.

Answer on Page 16

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
- Vicki, Jodie, Jonny & Gia after their loss
- Jeanette
- Andy and his mother & stepfather
- Nick's South African friend Sizwe

Internationally

We pray for peace. At the time of going to press the world is still in a very confused and worrying state. We have the appalling conditions of the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank and the tragic situation in Ukraine. Is there any hope of a ceasefire in either area? The position seems to change from day to day. Then there are so many other worrying situations such as the civil wars in Sudan and Burma. There is so much to pray for!

MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES (MSF)

(The church's charity for 2025)

This month an update from Gaza. This could be described as political but I have no reason to disbelieve what MSF tell us.

MSF teams warn that it will be simply impossible to force one million people – including hundreds of critically ill patients and newborn babies – out of Gaza City and into overcrowded and under-resourced areas in the centre and south of the Strip.

This would represent a death sentence for one million Palestinians.

Relentless bombing by the Israeli forces and the advance of the ground offensive are killing hundreds of Palestinians and driving them from their homes and shelters, sometimes multiple times. This follows a pattern of complete destruction previously witnessed by MSF teams in Rafah, in the south of the Gaza Strip.

“Some of our colleagues have been displaced more than eleven times since 2023,” says Jacob Granger, Emergency coordinator for MSF in Gaza.

Makeshift shelters offer little safety as bombing continues, often targeting areas to which survivors had already fled. An estimated one million displaced persons now occupy just 15 percent of Gaza’s territory, with conditions worsened by the destruction of almost 90 percent of water and sanitation systems.

“MSF continues to distribute water in the city but, with no water reserves left, if the Israeli forces make drinkable water production and distribution impossible, people will die in a matter of days”, says Granger.

Outbreaks of disease such as acute diarrhoea are already spreading in overcrowded, unsanitary living conditions.

A healthcare system on the brink

Israel’s offensive is deliberately wrecking Gaza’s healthcare capacity. More than half of the hospitals have been rendered inoperative; those remaining function on the brink of collapse under targeted attacks.

Bed occupancy rates reached 300 percent at Al Ahli Hospital, 240 percent at Shifa Hospital and 210 percent at Rantissi Hospital.

The ongoing escalation in Gaza City is threatening to close 11 of 18 partially functioning hospitals in the Gaza Strip, as well as other healthcare facilities. Meanwhile, the health authorities report zero stock remaining for over half of essential drugs.

Medical staff have endured repeated raids, health workers themselves have been killed, detained or threatened, including an MSF doctor still in detention with no formal charges against him.

In the medical facilities we support in Gaza City, we are seeing an increased number of wounded people with increasingly serious injuries.

However, patients who need intensive care are at risk of dying if forced to evacuate due to hospital closures. People with disabilities, people who are sick or wounded will not be able to evacuate.

Starvation as a policy

The siege has triggered a famine: restrictions on food, clean water, medicine, and aid deliveries are causing acute malnutrition rates to skyrocket.

Civilians desperate for aid at distribution points face deadly force. For months, MSF clinics responded to mass casualties resulting from Israeli fire at the food distribution sites managed by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) – the Israeli-US-backed body that has militarised aid distribution.

Israel's ground operations must stop immediately

Israeli forces aim to push Palestinians out of Gaza City through genocide, ethnic cleansing and creating impossible life conditions.

Nowhere is safe, and the vastly insufficient quantities of aid are being delivered through routes that are extremely dangerous for civilians. All the while, the destruction of critical infrastructure is ongoing and deliberate.

MSF calls for:

The immediate end to the use of evacuation orders as a means of forcible displacement, a lasting ceasefire, and the entry of humanitarian aid at scale.

We ask for the protection of medical facilities and the coordinated movements of humanitarian organisations.

The systematic destruction of an entire city and population must end.

We call on Israel's allies to stop arms transfers to Israel immediately and ramp up the pressure to halt the offensive.

Without urgent, radical intervention, Gaza faces total annihilation.



Thank you



FOR SHARING OUR SPECIAL DAY!

21.06.2025

Dear Elmers End Church,

Thank you for all your very
generous contribution towards our
honeymoon fund - we had the most
incredible Italian adventure!

Love,

Elizabeth & Simon

xxx

NOVEMBER NEWS AND VIEWS

Any articles or news for the next edition should be with me by Sunday 19 October. They can be handed to me or my daughter Katherine or sent to me

Anthony

BIRTHDAYS

We would like to wish Katherine
a very Happy Birthday in October

FOODBANK

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

Tinned Potatoes
Cooking Sauces
Sweets
Chocolate
Tinned Custard
Fruit Juice - Longlife
Toothbrushes - Adults & Children
Toothpaste - Adults & Children
Cleaning Products

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

ORIGINS OF WELL KNOWN EXPRESSIONS

UP TO SCRATCH

Under the London Prize Fighting Rules for boxing introduced in 1839 a fight ended when one of the participants was knocked down. He had a chance to stay in the fight, however, if he could crawl to a mark scratched in the centre of the ring. If he couldn't get up to the scratch he was declared the loser.



For further details, please contact Ian Moore at
ecochurchnetworkbromley@gmail.com

QUIZ NIGHT!

Saturday 22nd November @ Emmanuel Church, West Wickham
Bring your Eco Team—£5 per head—proceeds to A Rocha UK

Rest assured this is basically a general knowledge quiz, it won't require a masters degree in ecology!

Ian Moore
Emmanuel West Wickham

If anyone is interested in attending this quiz night please let me know and we'll try to organise an EEFC table

Anthony

What did the surgeon say to the patient who insisted on closing up his own incision?
Suture self. (groan !)

ANSWER TO THIS MONTH'S QUESTION

Hillary Clinton. The last Civil War veteran's widow, Gertrude Janeway, died in 2003. As of October 2022, one child of a participant was still receiving a Civil War pension.

VIOLET GRACE

Congratulations to Tom & Megan and of course the grandparents. She was born on 23 August and weighed 6 lb 9 oz



To everyone at EEFC

Megan and I would like to say thank you to you all, for our lovely card and the voucher that you sent to us on the birth of our daughter Violet Grace. It was a lovely surprise and we are very grateful. Violet is doing well and we are enjoying being new parents.

Many thanks again.

Tom

HARVEST SERVICE 21st SEPTEMBER



WHERE IS THIS?

