

News & Views

November 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 (pages 1 & 16),
The cover photo is of the Commonwealth War Cemetery at Bayeux in
Normandy, the largest Second World War cemetery in France.

SERVICES IN 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
- 16th 11.00 Morning Service led by Rev. Bryn Thomas
including Holy Communion
Organist : Peter Dowling
The service will be followed by light refreshments
- 23rd 11.00 Morning Service led by Joyce Brissett*
Organist : Stephen Davies
- 30th 11.00 Christmas Toy Service led by Katherine Bayley
Organist : Peter Dowling

SERVICES IN EARLY DECEMBER

- 7th 11.00 Morning Service led by Rev. Bryn Thomas
including Holy Communion
Organist : Peter Dowling
The service will be followed by light refreshments
- 14th 11.00 Morning Service led by Hilary Miles*
Organist : Stephen Davies

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

*Joyce Brissett is from St. Paul's URC Croydon

*Hilary Miles is from Christ Church URC Petts Wood



PASTORAL LETTER

What is a Pastoral Letter?

In the Bible, one of three New Testament books traditionally attributed to the Apostle Paul – 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus – which are addressed to individuals with pastoral oversight of churches the term “pastoral” refers to their subject matter:

Guidance for Christian living,
Church leadership,
and spiritual development

These letters provide instruction on matters like appointing church leaders and maintaining sound doctrine.

Why are they called Pastoral?

The name comes from the Latin word ‘pastor’ meaning shepherd.

Let’s look at the Pastoral letter to Titus. Titus was a Greek follower of Jesus and, for years, a trusted co-worker and travel companion to Paul. Titus had also helped Paul with crisis situations in the past.

In this letter we discover that Paul has assigned Titus the task of going to Crete, a large island off the coast of Greece, so that he could restore order to a network of house churches. Paul gives Titus clear instructions about his tasks in the church. Paul then offers guidance about the new kind of household and humanity that the gospel can create in Cretan communities.

The letter to Titus shows us Paul’s missionary strategy for how these churches could become agents of transformation within their communities.

Change cannot be won by waging a culture war or by assimilating the Cretan way of life. He calls on these Christians to wisely participate in Cretan culture rejecting what corrupts while embracing what is good. If they can live peaceably and devote themselves to Jesus and the common good, they will, in his words “show the beauty of the message about our saving God”.

Is Titus relevant today?

The letter to Titus gives the Church a rich theology of the gospel of grace for all people, connecting this gospel with the good works that must shine forth in the lives of Christians.

I have been looking at various stories, letters etc. from Biblical world and hope to put together thoughts and ideas in future News & Views.

In fact, this last week we have received at home a copy of the Ethiopian Bible which is the largest collection of Biblical text and has 88 books including all of the 66 books of the King James Bible and the 73 books of the Catholic Bible. The face page of the Ethiopian Bible introduction states that it is the oldest and most complete Christian Bible in existence, larger in scope, richer in history.

I will look forward to examining its contents and bring some new stories and ideas in a future News & Views.

Let me close with a prayer from the Ethiopian Bible.: -

O Lord God, ruler of the whole of creation, grant your powers to the people who believe in you. Amen

Dave

WORDS OF WISDOM

An overview of Luke's writing about Jesus

Our time alongside Luke

We bring our monthly look at Luke's gospel to a close now, having based our thoughts on the main events of the Christian year: Christmas, Good Friday, Easter and Pentecost. Then we looked at ch10 (the *Good Samaritan* and the story of *Martha and Mary*), and ch15 (*Lost sheep, lost coin, lost son*).

The Jesus Manifesto

Now we end where we could have started: ch4, where Jesus stands up in his Nazareth synagogue and preaches from Isaiah 61 (which first he reads) and refers to two stories from his Scriptures, our Old Testament.

The point of the Isaiah passage is that Jesus identifies himself with the following ideas: 'announce good news to the poor', 'proclaim release for prisoners', 'recovery of sight for the blind', and letting 'the broken victims go free'. All this is set in the context of 'the Spirit of the Lord is upon me' and proclaiming 'the year of the Lord's favour'.

That is in effect a manifesto for Jesus's whole ministry. We have already seen these and similar points made in the first two chapters: Mary's *Magnificat*: 'routed the proud ... brought down monarchs from their thrones ... raised on high the lowly ... filled the hungry with good things ... sent the rich empty away'. Then: angels coming to mere shepherds and those poor, ordinary, shepherds being the first to see Jesus in, yes, a feeding trough for animals...

Luke's keenness to show Christianity for ALL

The point of the stories from 1 Kings (with Elijah) and 2 Kings (with Elisha) is that God shows his favour to non-Jews – which infuriates the congregation. They take hold of Jesus to throw him over the cliff edge, when he calmly walks back through the gathered crowd. Jesus being Redeemer of all the world, not just of the Jews, is Luke's theme in his

volume 2, the Acts of the Apostles. This is just like Simeon, the venerable old gentleman in the Temple, into whose mouth Luke puts the words, ‘a light to lighten the *Gentiles*’.

Luke has his own view of the ministry of Jesus

We need to take on board that Luke is actively expressing what he sees as the main focus of Jesus. Not just facts, but Luke’s theological understanding of his Lord. The shepherds are in the story not because you (obviously) get shepherds and sheep on a hillside near Bethlehem, but because Luke makes them the emphasis in Jesus’ ministry: poor and ordinary people are just as important in God’s eyes as so-called important people. And so on throughout, especially those two stories of Jesus – the *Good Samaritan* and the *Lost Son*, which appear in no other gospel. Luke has multiple sources, which he puts together a couple of generations after the life of Jesus, using his own strong faith to guide him about how to express the direction of Jesus’ ministry. We can be very grateful that he did so.

How do we understand the inspiration of Scripture?

In the old days many Christians spoke of the Bible as the ‘inspired word of God’ – using that principle to claim factual word-for-word accuracy. An example of that was the belief that the world was created in literally six days. People with a more liberal view tended not to mention the idea of ‘inspiration of Scripture’.

I think we are now able to understand inspiration of Scripture in a more creative and rational way: a gospel writer like Luke puts together stories of Jesus in a devoted and honest way to the best of his ability from the angle of his own deep faith in Jesus. *That* is the work of the Holy Spirit. *That* is the way the inspiration of Scripture works.

It means we accept that different writers receive their inspiration in varied ways, simply because they have different personalities, understandings and sources. So their writings may not quite agree at certain points.

Occasionally these variations are thought-provoking, even disturbing

(e.g. Mark: ‘Why have you abandoned me?’ but Luke: ‘Into your hands I commit my spirit’). It may make us think more deeply, but we can cope with that, can’t we?

Bryn

POPPY APPEAL

Now we know where to get our poppies!

I will be helping with the Poppy Appeal again this year and will be in Tesco's Elmers End on the following dates from 10.00 am to 13.00pm.

Monday, 27th, Oct

Wednesday, 29th, Oct

Friday, 31st, Oct

Wednesday, 5th Nov

Friday, 7th Nov

If you want to pop along to get your poppy or just to say hello, feel free.

Sylvia

WHERE IS THIS?

Last month we were in Cambridge. At King's College Chapel. It was built by a succession of Kings of England from 1446 to 1515 which includes the Wars of the Roses. Its features include the world's largest fan vault. So where are we this month? Quite different but does it look a little familiar? Have a look on the back page.

Anthony

THIS MONTH'S QUESTION

What do Alexander the Great and Winnie the Pooh have in common?

Answer on Page 13

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
- Monica

Internationally

We pray for peace. As we seem to say every month the world is still in a very confused and worrying state. Will the ceasefire hold in Gaza and even if it does what does the future hold for Gaza and the West Bank? We will never forget the sight of the sea of rubble in Gaza. Officially worse than Berlin or Hamburg in 1945. Let's not forget that at the time of writing the Palestinians are still starving to death. Then there is the tragic situation in Ukraine. Is there any hope of a ceasefire here? Can we trust Putin or Trump? (Mustn't get political !) 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!

CHURCH FLOWERS

Flowers for the Church on Sunday, 19th October were given by Elizabeth in memory of her Dad, Ron, for his birthday on the 24th of October. Ron was a member of the church's amateur dramatics group, alongside his dear wife, Jean.

Thank you, Elizabeth, for your kind thoughtfulness.

If you wish to donate flowers, please let me or one of the Elders know.

Sylvia

HARVEST FESTIVAL

Harvest Festival and Brownie Parade is always the high point of our Autumn services, and so it proved again on 21 September. Our largest congregation so far this year contributed a cornucopia of produce for the Bromley Borough Foodbank, and the Rev Bryn Thomas conducted a service fitting for the occasion. The Brownies' flag was paraded before the service and presented to Bryn; two of our Brownies also read the lesson.

Congratulations and thanks to everyone involved.

Nick

I hope you saw the photo last month.

We've now received thanks from the Foodbank via Sylvia as follows:-

The total of our donations from the Harvest Festival service is **83.8kg** or for those of you, who like me are a stones, lbs and ounces person, it's **183 pounds** or **13 stones**. This is a tremendous amount from our congregation. We may be small in numbers, but, big in heart.

Bromley Foodbank wish to thank those who kindly donated in these difficult times.

DECEMBER/JANUARY NEWS AND VIEWS

Any articles or news for the next edition should be with me by Sunday 23 November. They can be handed to me or my daughter Katherine or sent to me at anthony.bayley@hotmail.com.

Anthony

BIRTHDAYS

We would like to wish the following
a very Happy Birthday in November.

Bron
Hilda
Jeanette

HOMING PIGEONS

In 1957 the US Army sold off the last of its homing pigeons. It had used them with great success during both World Wars. They were considered undetectable and over 90% of their messages were delivered successfully. They stopped using them due to new technology.

Genuine announcements from Church Bulletins (not ours!)

Don't let worry kill you – let the Church help

Thursday night potluck supper. Prayer & Medication to follow

Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our church & community

This afternoon there will be a meeting in the south and north ends of the church. Children will be baptized at both ends

FOODBANK

Collection Point



Ending hunger together across the [Bromley] area

Providing emergency food and practical support for people left without enough money to live on.

Please donate an item or two from the list.

Thank you!

Shopping list

Tinned Desserts/Desserts

Sweets/Chocolate

Coffee

Vegetarian

Milk (UHT or powdered)

Mens Deodorant

Shaving Foam/Gel

Bleach



01234 567 890

locationname.foodbank.org.uk

Registered Charity in England & Wales (XXXXXX) and Scotland XXXXXX).

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. However, please check the sell-by dates.

Thank you.

Sylvia

ORIGINS OF WELL KNOWN EXPRESSIONS

FOR THE HIGH JUMP

This British phrase does not in fact refer to athletics but instead harks back to the hanging of a convicted criminal. The gallows were known as “the high jump” hence its modern meaning of getting into trouble.

QUIZ NIGHT!

This general knowledge quiz will be held on Saturday 22 November at Emmanuel Church West Wickham at a cost of £5 per head. If you are interested in attending please let me know as we are in course of organizing a team from Elmers End Church.

Anthony

ANSWER TO THIS MONTH'S QUESTION

Their middle name.

THANKS

Thank you everyone for my card and presents. I will enjoy spending my voucher and eating the chocs. The messages were very kind and thank you Sylvia for the delicious cake.

Katherine

TOP OF THE PEW

The Grand Final of the competition will be between St. Augustine's and Beckenham Methodist Church and will take place at 8.00 on Friday November 21 at Christ Church URC Petts Wood. Entrance is £1 at the door and all proceeds are for this year's charity Bromley Homeless Services. The Question Master will be Rev. Bill Bowman

MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES (MSF)

(The church's charity for 2025)

This month we're in Ukraine

At a Ukrainian hospital located closest to the eastern frontline, MSF teams provide surgical care to both war-wounded patients, and to those whose chronic conditions have been made worse by delay and require surgery.

Working with a headlamp in case of power outages, Dr Khassan El-Kafarna does what he can for patients like Volodymyr, who is suffering from a rare type of gangrene.

It is quiet in the hospital. The corridors are poorly lit despite the bright sunny morning. At night, Russian military drones were flying over the city, the resulting sound of explosions made it hard for patients to sleep, so now they are napping in their rooms.

Volodymyr is waiting for his second surgery. He is from the village of Komar in Donetsk region, located less than six miles from the frontline. He came to the hospital four days ago with Fournier's gangrene – a type of flesh-eating disease that should have been treated much earlier. "I could no longer walk, my neighbour had to bring me to the hospital. I should have come about a month ago, but I just couldn't make it," says Volodymyr.

"It is hell in our village now. The entire street was destroyed, everyone is hiding in their basements. As soon as it seems to become quieter, the shelling starts again."

Patients such as Volodymyr who have neglected diseases are common in this hospital, the closest medical facility to the eastern frontline that provides secondary care. It is located at the intersection of three regions with active fighting, so it receives high numbers of people seeking medical help.

MSF teams support the facility's emergency department and operating theatre.

Teams also conduct ambulance referrals for patients who need to be examined by highly specialised surgeons in hospitals further away from the frontline. This helps to alleviate the burden on the health facility, however, patients with complications do not stop coming.

People come here from the frontline communities of Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhzhia regions, where the shelling does not stop, even for a day.

The living conditions there are difficult. Patients often do not have access to medicines and medical care, or to food and hygiene items, spending most of their time hiding in the basements of their homes.

The most intense fighting continues in Donetsk region, where the frontline remains unstable and shifts rapidly, leaving behind devastated towns and villages with people trapped in them.

Hospitals in these areas have had to evacuate their medical staff and equipment, forcing residents to travel long distances to reach the nearest medical facility.

Roads are often littered with remnants of weapons, some of which may still contain unexploded ordnance, making travel extremely dangerous. As a result, many people delay seeking medical help, and their conditions worsen.

A nurse helps him pull on a medical gown. Volodymyr is on the operating table, he has already received anaesthesia. The hospital nurses, Dr Khassan and the second operating surgeon are ready to begin.

Dr Khassan works with a headlamp. There is no urgent need for it now, as the special lighting in the room is working at full capacity, but he's used to having it, just in case.

Due to attacks on the energy infrastructure, power outages happen unexpectedly. The hospital has generators, but the surgeons cannot afford to have any interruptions in their work.

"We are dealing with infected wounds. Patients couldn't get help for a long time and they come to us in advanced stages of sepsis"

DR KHASSAN EL-KAFARNA

Volodymyr's operation lasted less than an hour. This was not the first surgery he had to undergo.

"When he first came to us, he had septic shock and anaemia. Now we got rid of the source of the infection, but he definitely needs tertiary care," explains Dr Khassan.

"We need to stabilise him before we can refer him to a higher-level facility, because he needs a plastic surgeon, a urologist, and admission to intensive care."

The nurse finishes bandaging Volodymyr, and he is sent to the intensive care unit. There is a long road to recovery ahead of him. Despite his condition and the approach of the frontline closer to his village, Volodymyr says that most of all he wants to get back home.

AUTUMN IN THE NEW FOREST



WHERE IS THIS?

