

News & Views

June 2026



Elmers End Free Church

Goddard Road, Elmers End,

Beckenham, Kent BR3 4BN

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

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 both),
Dave (15)

The front cover is of the Basilica de Notre Dame de Quebec, Canada.

JULY / AUGUST NEWS AND VIEWS

Any articles or news for the next edition should be with me by Sunday 21 June. They can be handed to me or my daughter Katherine.

Anthony

SERVICES IN JUNE

- 7th 11.00 Morning Service led by June Mackenzie*
Organist : Peter Dowling
The service will be followed by light refreshments
- 14th 11.00 Morning Service led by Janet Godden*
Organist : Peter Dowling
The service will be followed by light refreshments
- 21st 11.00 Morning Service led by Rev. Bryn Thomas
Including Holy Communion
Organist : Stephen Davies
The service will be followed by light refreshments
- 28th 11.00 Morning Service led by Martin Leonard*
Organist : Peter Dowling
The service will be followed by light refreshments

SERVICES IN EARLY JULY

- 5th 11.00 Morning Service. Still to be arranged.
Organist : Peter Dowling
The service will be followed by light refreshments
- 12th 11.00 Morning Service led by Martin Fosten*
Organist : Peter Dowling
The service will be followed by light refreshments

- * Janet Godden is from St. John's URC Orpington
- * June Mackenzie is from St. George's Beckenham
- * Martin Leonard is from Christ Church URC Petts Wood
- * Martin Fosten is from Christ Church URC Petts Wood



PASTORAL LETTER

THE POWER OF PRAYER

Every Sunday in Church we say together the Lord's Prayer and we follow the prayers led by our preacher. Every day most of us pray to God for our loved ones, for those in need of prayer whether we know them or not and we pray for this sad world that we inhabit, so full of problems and heartaches. Do we really believe that our prayers actually make a difference, however small?

Recently I was chatting to a friend who I have known as an adult for more than 60 years so I have absolutely no reason to disbelieve what she told me. Many years ago, she and her husband took up horse riding. One day, whilst out riding, she fell off the horse and was in considerable pain. Although this reduced somewhat over time it never left her and she was in almost constant pain. Driving was a problem as every bump in the road sent shoots of pain through her body. As a consequence, they had to cancel various touring holidays which they loved. At some point, in desperation, she visited a professional privately (I think it was an osteopath) who asked if she had an X ray. She didn't, so he took one. When he studied it, he said he couldn't help because various bones had re-joined badly and he was more likely to do harm than good if he attempted anything. Some time later she arrived at her Church one Sunday (she was attending a Baptist Church at the time) and the Minister said to her "Would you mind coming into the Vestry after the service because God told me last night to pray for you" She said "Could it wait for next week as my husband stayed at home this morning to look after the grandchildren and I need to get home" "No" he said. "The message was quite explicit that it must be today" So she

agreed. After the service she went into the vestry, sat down and the Minister and some of the Elders prayed over her for an end to her pain. At the end she thanked them and drove home feeling exactly the same as usual. She cooked dinner for her family and afterwards sat with them all for a while. Then she got up and exclaimed “That didn’t hurt”. She has had no pain in all the years since then.

What are we to make of this. Clearly it proves that prayer can be effective. It’s rarely as clear as this. We pray for peace in Ukraine and Iran etc and nothing seems to happen but if millions of us do so, who knows what the effect might be. We must have faith. As Matthew said,

Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. (Matthew 7 7&8)

Anthony

WORDS OF WISDOM

ASCENSION

The trouble with the Ascension is that we tend to ignore it. Many good Christians hardly know when it is and how it relates to Passover/Easter and to Pentecost. Those who do know about it can get embarrassed because they find it so hard to take as factually possible what the Bible seems to say: Jesus going upwards into the sky.

So speculation begins: perhaps it was not a solid body – after all, Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 pours scorn on people who think the Risen Christ had a solid body – for Paul it was a new kind of spiritual body (and we cast around, unsure about what he means).

Or, there was no Ascension – only Luke mentions it – perhaps it was one of those stories that had grown up during the first century – others reject it, and Luke is the sole gospel writer/editor to use it – so we quietly leave it to one side...

And along comes a preacher who claims that it is one of the most important statements in the New Testament! How does a Christian who has wrestled sincerely with all these matters adjust to that? We are going for meaning and significance, rather than factual happening – we live 2000 years later, and human thinking has developed over the centuries. These are also the sort of ideas that Luke had (whatever factual reality he may have accepted).

1. ‘Ascension’ enables us to recognise the *man* Jesus of Nazareth as being equal in status to the heavenly Father and Creator. Instead of just being the son of a carpenter in a Galilean village, he is the Son of God, taking a position of honour alongside the Father.
2. It broadens the territory. That troublesome tiny country at the eastern end of the Mediterranean *confined* Jesus – the title ‘Messiah’ was intended to apply to *their* long-awaited human rescuer/leader. Now ‘Ascension’ relates the Risen Christ to the whole world. The sky, as it were, to which he rises, indicates the entire universe.
3. It marks the end of the earthly phase of the ministry of Jesus – all those healings, all the wonderful encouragement to live to the glory of God, with his teaching and preaching. Now it is **we** who have to provide the person-power to put into practice all that the Spirit of Jesus requires of us. We have to take responsibility and get on with it. We can feel encouraged by remembering that, in Luke’s account, Jesus *was blessing* his followers as he departed.

Surely that’s enough! Ten days after Ascension we celebrate Pentecost – the Jewish festival of Weeks – the spring harvest festival and celebration of the Ten Commandments, now having become a glorious *Christian* festival. Because it is a pilgrimage festival, thousands came to Jerusalem – only to be knocked sideways by the behaviour of the followers of Jesus,

who were enlightened, enlivened, strengthened, comforted, re-energised and amazed by the outpouring of the Spirit of goodness and love. Ascension and Pentecost are big moments in our faith. *Bryn*

THIS MONTH'S QUESTION

Whose departure from Ongar station, formerly on the Central Line, is commemorated by a plaque there?

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
- Anne's cousin Fiona & her husband Gary who is currently battling cancer
- Giles who has Alzheimer's
- Jeanette
- Andy and his mother & stepfather
- Monica
- Pam
- Hilda
- Brian

Internationally

As usual we pray for peace. More so than ever! Every month, sadly, it seems the world is still in a very confused and worrying state. The war between USA/Israel and Iran/Lebanon is very worrying and may have horrific repercussions for the whole world, let alone the people of the Middle East. At the time of writing, it looks as if there just might be an end in sight, but we've heard that before!!!

Will the ceasefire hold in Gaza? Will Stage 2 actually start? How many Palestinians have got to die in Gaza while it is discussed? What is happening in the West Bank to the Palestinian residents there?

We must not forget the tragic situation in Ukraine. Is there any hope of a ceasefire here? But at what cost for Ukraine, being bombed every night? Have the Ukrainians got enough defence weapons or are they all going to the Middle East? The whole situation here is critical.

Then there are all the other worrying situations such as the civil wars in Sudan and Burma and Yemen,

There is so much to pray for, so it seems appropriate at this point to quote the peace prayer which we say together every Sunday morning as we light our peace candle.

*We light this candle for peace, Lord.
May its light scatter the darkness;
may its flame be a symbol of hope;
may its burning be a sign of faith
joining many other lights for peace.*

*We light this candle for peace.
May our lives be an expression of peace-making,
may we seek to be lights in a dark world,
pointing to you, Jesus, the Prince of Peace,
and following the way of peace.*

*Let the candle burn as a sign for peace,
offered to you. Amen.*

John Johansen-Berg

MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES (MSF)

(The church's charity for 2025/26)

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), MSF teams are mobilising to help contain the sudden surge in Ebola cases.

We are leading experts in treating and containing Ebola. Médecins Sans Frontières / Doctors Without Borders (MSF) was on the frontline throughout the massive 2014-16 West Africa epidemic, and has responded to multiple outbreaks in the DRC alone. So far, there are more than 500 suspected cases and 134 deaths reported in the DRC, with two cases

confirmed across the border in Uganda. The outbreak's epicentre is in the DRC's eastern province of Ituri.

Unlike most previous Ebola disease outbreaks, this one is caused by the Bundibugyo virus. It kills up to 40 percent of those infected, making it less lethal than the more common Ebola virus. However, there is no approved vaccine and no approved treatment, so responding to this virus is particularly challenging.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has now declared the situation a "public health emergency of international concern".

The latest: How is MSF responding to the Ebola disease outbreak?

MSF teams are often among the first humanitarian responders on the ground for one key reason: because we are already there. MSF has been working in the DRC since 1977, providing vital healthcare services through conflict, disaster and disease.

- On 9 May, MSF received alerts of deaths from a 'suspected viral haemorrhagic fever' spreading since the start of April. We sent a team to investigate with the Ministry of Health. We have since identified suspected cases in several cities and established temporary isolation units for affected patients.
- Our medical and logistics teams are now working around the clock to prepare a large-scale emergency response in the DRC, in collaboration with the Congolese health authorities.
- Essential medical supplies and equipment are en route to affected areas from the capital Kinshasa, as well as Uganda and Europe. A total of 3,000 sets of personal protective equipment (PPE) – such as gloves, masks, goggles, gowns and protective boots – arrived in Bunia on 19 May. Another 60,000 sets of PPE are due to arrive soon.
- MSF staff with experience responding to Ebola disease outbreaks have been dispatched to the DRC to establish the emergency response. They will provide support to existing medical projects and respond to new alerts in surrounding areas. In Goma, MSF is set up to set-up and run a specialist Ebola treatment centre if needed.

- We will work to ensure strict infection prevention measures are in place for healthcare projects and facilities in the DRC. We must protect patients and staff, and ensure they can continue to access medical services.
- MSF's Ebola responses are based on six pillars: care and isolation of patients; tracing and follow-up of patient contacts; raising community awareness of the disease (such as how to prevent it and where to seek care); conducting safe burials; proactively detecting new cases; and supporting existing health facilities.
- **What is Ebola?**
- Ebola is a rare but deadly disease which can kill up to 90 percent of those infected.
- The most commonly known viruses within the Ebola disease genus are the Ebola virus, Sudan virus and Bundibugyo virus. There is an approved treatment and a preventive vaccine for the Ebola virus. But the current Ebola outbreak reported in the DRC is caused by the Bundibugyo Ebola virus, for which there is no approved vaccine or treatment.
- It can be difficult to diagnose because the early symptoms, like a fever and sore throat, are common. To confirm an Ebola diagnosis, special tests need to be carried out. These require test kits specific not to the disease itself, but to each individual virus in order to detect it. However, these test kits are currently in short supply for the Bundibugyo virus, which significantly slows down case confirmation and, consequently, the implementation of contact tracing and patient isolation.
- Ebola is highly infectious and can be transmitted from both animals and humans. Human-to-human transmission happens through close contact with blood, secretions, or other bodily fluids of infected individuals. This is why people have to wear full personal protective equipment to prevent catching or spreading the virus.
- Medical teams can give patients the best chance of survival by helping to manage the symptoms of the virus, and treating other diseases the patient may have.
- Once a patient recovers from Ebola, they're immune to the form of the virus they contracted.

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SMALL  *Business* BIG HEART

ANSWER TO THIS MONTH'S QUESTION

Fr. Thomas Byles, the Catholic priest who refused a place on several lifeboats and went down with the Titanic, leading other stranded passengers in prayer. Priest-in-charge at St Helen's church, Ongar, he was on the way to New York to officiate at his brother's wedding

WHERE IS THIS?

Last month was tricky. We were in Leeds on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal. It took 40 years to build and was finished in 1816. It is 127 miles long crossing the Pennines and has 91 locks. So where are we this month? Quite different and a bit easier. Have a look on the back page.

Anthony

TOP OF THE PEW

This year's competition is now under way, and we will be playing St. James on Sunday June 21 at 7.30. A local derby. All are welcome. This year's charity for the competition is Bromley District Talking News for the Blind. Very well worth supporting.

FOODBANK

Please don't feel under any obligation to give, but in case you are, here is a little guidance from the Foodbank on items particularly needed at the present time. Many thanks.

Long life desserts
Tinned Tomatoes
Tinned cold meats
Long life fruit juices
Laundry sheets / Pods

Tea
Coffee
Sanitary towels
Ladies deodorant
Multi surface wipes / spray



The Orpington Chorale
65th Anniversary Concert

Sir John Rutter *Dancing Tree*

conducted by the composer

Mendelssohn *Hear my Prayer*

Vivaldi *Gloria*

7.30pm Saturday July 18th 2026

All Saints' Church,

Bark Hart Rd

Orpington BR6 0QD

Tickets available from May 30th

Soloists:

William Wells (treble)

Ellie Parsons (soprano)

Natalie Robinson (mezzo-soprano)

Gwenllian Llyr (harp)

Phoebe Tak Man Chow (organ)

Dominic Wells (conductor)



Tickets from Ticket Source,
Adults £18, under 18s free.

<https://www.ticketsource.com/the-orpington-chorale>



CLOTHES BANK

Trussell Trust Bromley are in the process of setting up a clothes bank.

If you have any unwanted clean clothes in good order, women's, children's, babies and especially men's, the clothes bank would gratefully receive them.

Please bring them to church and leave them in a black plastic bag behind where we give the food donations.

All contributions gratefully received

Sylvia

LOCAL WILDLIFE



COMPTON ACRES IN SUMMER



WHERE IS THIS?

