

News & Views

July / August 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 & 20 both),
URC (9), Fai (18), Sylvia (19)

The front cover this month is of York Minster.

SEPTEMBER NEWS AND VIEWS

Any articles or news for the next edition should be with me by Sunday 23 August. They can be handed to Katherine or sent to me.

Anthony

SERVICES IN JULY

- 5th 11.00 Morning Service led by Joyce Brissett*
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
- 19th 11.00 Morning Service led by Rev. Bryn Thomas
Including Holy Communion
Organist : Peter Dowling
The service will be followed by light refreshments
And a Church Meeting
- 26th 11.00 Morning Service led by Katherine Bayley
Organist : Stephen Davies
The service will be followed by light refreshments

SERVICES IN AUGUST

- 2nd 11.00 Morning Service led by Jon Dean*
Organist : Peter Dowling
The service will be followed by light refreshments
- 9th 11.00 Morning Service led by Janet Godden*
Organist : Peter Dowling
The service will be followed by light refreshments
- 16th 11.00 Morning Communion Service led by Rev. Bryn Thomas
Organist : Peter Dowling
The service will be followed by light refreshments
- 23rd 11.00 Morning Service still to be arranged
Organist : Digital Hymnary
The service will be followed by light refreshments
- 30th 11.00 Morning Service led by Sue Thomas*
Organist : Digital Hymnary
The service will be followed by light refreshments

SERVICES IN EARLY SEPTEMBER

6th 11.00 Morning Service led by Jonathan Dolling*
Organist : Peter Dowling
The service will be followed by light refreshments

13th 11.00 Morning Service led by Clive Timehin*
Organist : Peter Dowling
The service will be followed by light refreshments

- * Joyce Brissett is from St. Paul's URC Croydon
- * Janet Godden is from St. John's URC Orpington
- * Sue Thomas is from Emmanuel URC West Wickham
- * Jon Dean is from Sanderstead URC
- * Martin Fosten is from Christ Church URC Petts Wood
- * Clive Timehin is from the Bromley Methodist Circuit
- * Jonathan Dolling is from Herne Hill URC

CHURCH MEETING / AGM

There will be a Church Meeting / A.G.M. after the Service on July 19th. If you have any items for the Agenda please advise Anthony in person or by email by July 15th.

ELDERS MEETING

There will be an Elders Meeting on Monday 6th July at 6.30 pm

The shinbone is a device for finding furniture in a darkened room

Everyone has a photographic memory; some just don't have film



PASTORAL LETTER

Dear members and friends of Elmers End Free Church,

Like the Disciples at Pentecost, we are standing on the edge of an exciting new season for our church, and it is time for us to get ready for action. It is completely normal to feel a bit unsure when we look at the future. We usually want a complete roadmap before taking our first steps. But faith often asks us to move forward before the whole plan is revealed. That is exactly where we find ourselves today as we start the important work of fixing up our church building for its future use without a minister in place to guide us forward.

This journey is a lot like going to school. We attend classes, do our homework, and study hard for years, but most of us have no idea what job we will end up doing. We do the work anyway because we know we need to be equipped for whatever comes next. The preparation itself is the point. In the same way, we are getting our building ready for a future mission, even though we do not quite know what that mission is yet. Our church building is a tool for God's work, and we need to make sure it is ready for action.

Think about the first disciples right before Pentecost. Jesus had ascended into heaven and left them with instructions to wait. He gave them a promise but kept the details hidden, telling them:

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." — Acts 1:8

So, they gathered in an upstairs room, praying and waiting together. They knew something big was coming, but they did not know God's exact plan. They could not foresee the wind and fire of the Holy Spirit that would completely transform them. They did not have a strategic plan; they just trusted, waited, and prepared.

Like those disciples, our main job right now is to pray and listen deeply for what God wants us to do. True listening takes patience and an open mind. We need to set aside our own old ideas of what church should look like and ask the Holy Spirit to show us what our local community really needs from us.

Our focus today is not to figure out every single detail, but simply to get ready—both structurally and spiritually. When Pentecost finally arrived, the disciples were ready to jump into action because they had used their waiting time wisely. Let's use this moment to update our space, open our hearts, and listen for God's voice. He has a wonderful purpose for Elmers End Free Church, and He will guide our steps when the time is right.

Warmly,

Anne, Church Elder

WORDS OF WISDOM

How Matthew constructs his Gospel

To recap... Matthew has two piles of the sayings of Jesus: the main one that he has gathered himself, and another with sayings that Luke also knows. Matthew's task is huge, because he does not know when Jesus spoke these sayings, nor which go together or separately, so he works sensitively to group them together, with his amazing insight into the mind of the person who has spiritually transformed his life. By good fortune – or, better, by God's providential goodness(!) – he has a copy of Mark's gospel in front of him, which gives him the general order of events; so he can copy all that, making stylistic changes or summarising when he thinks Mark gives unnecessary detail.

When he reads through all his sayings of Jesus, he reflects on all that Mark's gospel has given him, and spots the fact that there are five great blocks of coherent teaching, which scholars over the centuries have called the five discourses. The first is the Sermon on the Mount, which Matthew compiles from multiple short sayings, to form ch. 5/6/7.

The second is ch. 10, which focuses on the disciples (all named) and the way Jesus sends them out to proclaim their fresh, renewed version of Judaism based on the Messiahship of Jesus. There are a few encouraging sayings, but it may be a surprise to us that Jesus gives so many warnings about the opposition, even persecution, that they will receive – and about the way families will be split over these teachings.

It is likely that this reflects not only the situation back in the 30s but also the unsettled times in which Matthew lives fifty years later. Probably the older family members stay loyal to the traditional faith that has guided them throughout their lives, but younger family members will be energised by the fresh slant on their faith that the disciples provide, and, above all, by the sheer wonder of their ability to cure physical and mental conditions that have plagued so many lives.

One saying seems so extreme that we wonder if it is true: Jesus says that he has come 'not to bring peace but a sword', which contradicts his whole general message of love, peace and reconciliation. Here we must remember the context: he means the symbolic sword that divides families over the disciples' message – he does *not* mean that, as a rule for life, he recommends physical conflict as the way to settle disputes. It is simply that he is aware – and the disciples need to be aware – that there will be 'sharp' disagreement over the disruption that may occur.

One of the comforting aspects is his instruction to 'wipe the dust off your feet' and move on, if a household rejects them. It is as if Jesus is telling them not to waste their breath, nor any of their energies, if they realise they are not going to make progress.

For us 2000 years later, this chapter helps us to understand that our faith is not shared by everyone, and that we are simply required to do our best to live by it and to spread it among other people. But Jesus does not want us to persevere unrealistically – to waste our energies, if the seed we sow does not land in fertile soil.

So there are big discourses in ch. 5/6/7 and in ch. 10. What would you think lies in between, in ch. 8/9? Given the way ch. 10 starts with Jesus' command to go out and cure diseases, Jesus is shown as leading by example: ch. 8/9 give accounts of stunningly effective healings by Jesus.

Try reading ch. 5/6/7 all in one go (about 5 minutes) – then the inspiring 8 & 9 – then ch. 10 fits in beautifully. Try to remember that in the whole of world literature there is nothing more significant than the ethical statements of the Sermon on the Mount. Forget Shakespeare, Plato, Aristotle and whoever else you may call a great thinker... Matthew ch. 5/6/7 is the peak of human ethics straight from Jesus. And you have it all conveniently in a book at home... so do open it! *Bryn*

THIS MONTH'S QUESTION

What sits alongside the V&A Museum in Dundee?

Answer on Page 15

Genuine announcements from Church Bulletins (not ours!)

Wednesday the Ladies Liturgy Society will meet. Mrs Jones will sing "Put me in my little bed" accompanied by the pastor.

Thursday at 5 pm there will be a meeting of the Little Mothers Club. All wishing to become little mothers, please see the minister in his study.

BIRTHDAYS

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

July

Devi
Jayne
Elizabeth
Peter

August

Nick
Charles

SOUTHERN SYNOD OF URC

NEW MODERATOR



After a gap of a year or so, a new Moderator has been appointed for Southern Synod. He is Rev. Paul Robinson who is currently Minister of the United Church in Rhyl, North Wales as well as serving in various capacities within Wales.

In 1913 Vienna's residents included 3 future dictators, Adolf Hitler (then a struggling artist), Joseph Stalin (recently escaped exile in Siberia) and Joseph Tito (currently a factory worker who would go on to rule Yugoslavia)



The
United
Reformed
Church
Southern
Synod

The Southwark Group of Churches

invite you to the

Induction and Ordination of Azeem Qadir Bakhsh As Minister

to Dulwich Grove, Camberwell Green, Copleston
and Crossway group of churches



Service to be held at
Dulwich Grove URC
East Dulwich Grove
SE22 8RH



**Saturday 5th
September 2026
at 2:00pm**

Presiding minister
Rev'd Dr Elaine Colechin
Synod Clerk of Southern Synod



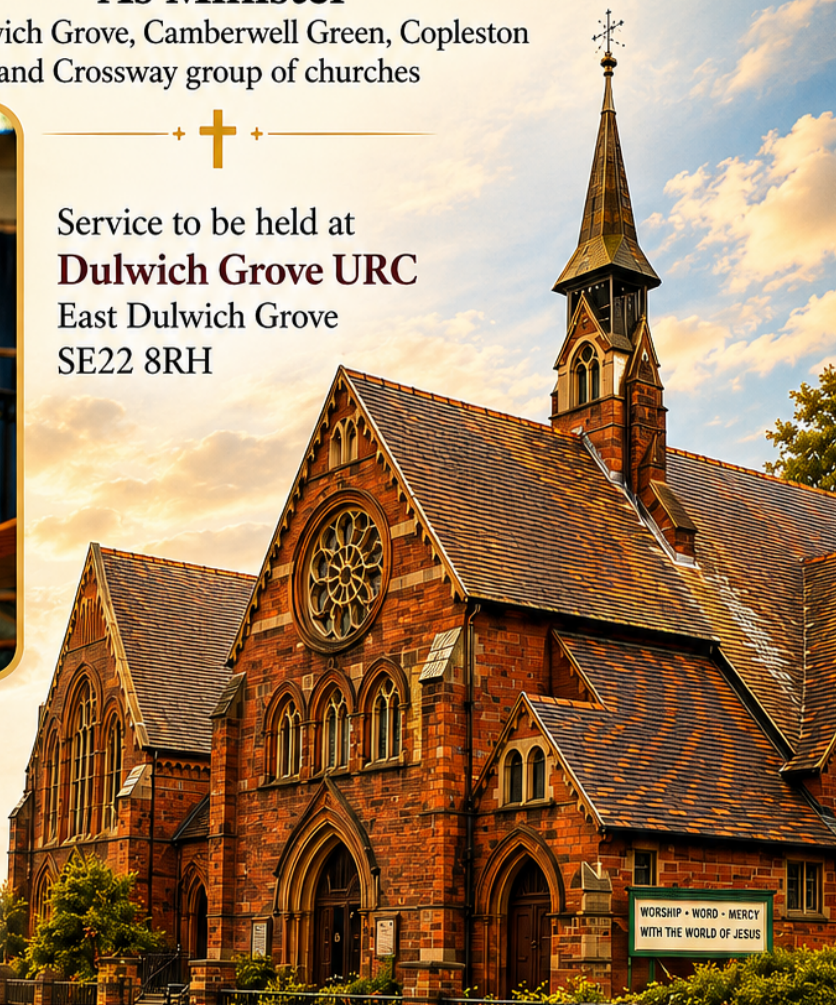
Transport
Nearby Rail Stations –
East Dulwich,
Denmark Hill, Herne Hill
Buses – 176, 185, 40, 42



Refreshments will be
served after the service



Please confirm your presence to (RSVP)
Martin Leonard : ollie57ml@gmail.com





CHRIST CHURCH BECKENHAM

1876 - 2026 - 2176

CELEBRATING 150 YEARS

Saturday 27th June, 10:30am to 5pm

Halls open for exhibition of CCB 1876-2176:

- History of the Church and Halls
- See and search our Baptism and Marriage registers
- View our archive of photos including when CCB was a 1st WW surgical hospital
 - Explore how our new building plans will bless our community
 - Discover the people CCB has helped across the world over the years
- Check out the huge number of activities on offer in our halls for all ages
 - View the Church and Information Film with free refreshments
 - Enjoy activities for children and a big welcome to SEN families

TEENAGERS GRAND IMMERSIVE **CLUEDO** @3PM

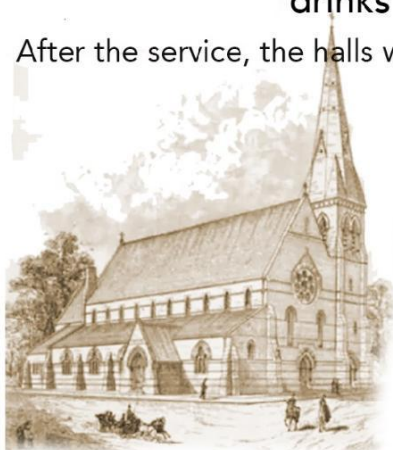
Saturday 27th June, 5pm to 8pm - Main Hall

- OPEN MIC: Share your memories of Christ Church through the years with finger food and drinks.

Sunday 28th June, 10:30am

All-Age Celebration Holy Communion service, followed by finger food, drinks and cake at the back of church.

After the service, the halls will open again until 5pm, with tea/coffee served in church.



For more information scan the QR code or contact
Helen on 02086503847 / email:office@ccb.org.uk

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
- 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 Smith

Nationally

There is so much to pray for here at home. A tragic train accident and in politics a possible change in Prime Minister. Whoever is leading our country by the time you read this, we pray that they will lead us wisely. The country seems more divided than ever in living memory and extremists of a variety of kinds are sadly making their presence felt. As I said, so much to pray for!

Internationally

As usual we pray for peace. More so than ever! The world is so complicated. Is the peace between US and Iran going to hold? What effect is the situation in Lebanon going to have? No one knows but it doesn't

look good. Are the Straits of Hormuz actually going to open? This would help trade throughout the world.

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 actually happening there as we don't hear any more? (See the report from Medecins sans Frontieres later in this edition) What is happening to the Palestinian residents in the West Bank? What little we hear is bad.

Whatever you do, don't forget Ukraine. Is there any hope of a ceasefire here? Militarily, Ukraine seems to be doing better but is it enough to bring Putin to the table? Trump seems to have lost interest! People are dying in large numbers on both sides.

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

So much to pray for!

MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES (MSF)

(The church's charity for 2025/26)

Decades of repression and conflict, and an Israel-imposed blockade from 2007 on the Gaza Strip, Palestine , exploded on 7 October 2023 when Hamas attacked Israel on a large scale. In response, Israel launched massive attacks on Gaza.

Since 7 October 2023 and as of 6 April 2026, at least 72,312 Palestinians have been killed and 172,134 injured, according to Gaza's Ministry of Health. The Israeli authorities are purposefully and systematically destroying the conditions necessary for life in Gaza, while also severely limiting the entry of food, water, medicines, and other essential supplies

into the Strip. The ceasefire, which came into effect on 10 October 2025, has done little to ease people's suffering. Families are still displaced and living among rubble; health centres and hospitals are under-resourced and overwhelmed; and bombs continue to fall.

Meanwhile, the Israeli authorities continue to tighten their grip on Palestinians in the West Bank, by imposing further movement restrictions and increasing their military operations.

At a time when Palestinians need more humanitarian assistance, Israel has withheld the registration of 37 international NGOs, including ours. As of 1 January 2026, the Israeli authorities have prevented all MSF supplies and international staff from entering Gaza, depriving our medical response of much-needed materials and technical skills. On 26 February, our international staff were forced to leave Palestine, ahead of Israel's 1 March deadline for unregistered NGOs to leave the country. Our Palestinian staff remain; we will continue to provide medical care and bear witness to people's suffering in Palestine for as long as possible, working under our registration with the Palestinian Authority.

Israel must stop pursuing genocide in Gaza, and allow the unimpeded entry of humanitarian assistance, and at scale.

Between 7 October 2023 and 31 January 2026, MSF teams in Gaza provided

1,652,600 OUTPATIENT CONSULTATIONS

586,000 EMERGENCY ROOM CONSULTATIONS

95,300 INDIVIDUAL MENTAL HEALTH SESSIONS
82,200 PATIENTS ADMITTED
41,300 SURGERIES
22,500 BIRTHS ASSISTED

KIDS CLUB KAMPALA

This was our Charity in 2024 and we've received an update from them.

In 2025 they reached out to over 100,000 people across East Africa.

During 2025 they merged with The Mango Tree which expanded their reach and remit across East Africa into Kenya and Tanzania.

Last year the international funding landscape saw dramatic change. Cuts to UK Aid and USAID have hit East Africa hard, driving a surge in demand for their work, while programme costs rise and UK fundraising grows tougher.

Since they began in 2009 they have achieved the following:-

Provided more than 45 Million meals to hungry children & families.

Provided 5,370 adults with vital skills training.

259 children rescued from abandonment.

10,260 vulnerable young people supported with counselling.

More than 2,840 children given the gift of free education.

More than 29,000 trees planted in climate risk areas.

More than 13,780 children facilitated with safe spaces & play areas.

More than 1.6 million people reached across their programmes

ANSWER TO THIS MONTH'S QUESTION

Captain Scott's ship, the Discovery.

JOIN US FOR

AFTERNOON *Tea*

**RELAX,
INDULGE
& ENJOY!**

**A DELICIOUS
SELECTION OF
SANDWICHES,
CAKES, SCONES
& MORE!**

**HOT DRINK
INCLUDED**

**PERFECT FOR
FRIENDS, FAMILY
& CELEBRATIONS!**

GOOD COMPANY. GREAT FOOD. WONDERFUL MEMORIES.

SATURDAY, 18TH JULY, 2026
DOORS OPEN AT 1:30 PM
AFTERNOON TEA SERVED AT 2:00 PM

DULWICH GROVE URC CHURCH HALL
EAST DULWICH GROVE
LONDON SE22 8RH

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E-mail: karen.chambers@btconnect.com**



WHERE IS THIS?

Last month was relatively easy. We were at Hampton Court Palace. Purchased by Archbishop Thomas Wolsey in 1514 and rebuilt by him. Then in 1529 he gave it to Henry VIII as a bribe hoping to save his life, which it didn't. George II was the last King to live there. So where are we this month? Quite different and perhaps not too difficult. Have a look on the back page.

Anthony

TOP OF THE PEW



Our team played St. James and WE WON. Yes, after falling behind bit by bit we caught right up in one round and finally overtook them in the last (bible) round and won 86 to 84. We also raised £67.43 for this year's charity – Bromley District Talking News for the Blind. Thanks to the team shown and to our scorer Anne

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 Potatoes
Chocolate / sweets
Bleach
Razors

Shampoo
Conditioner
Shaving foam / gel
Mens deodorant
Multi surface wipes / spray

THANK YOU very much 



Sienna Rose Millington

9th April 2026 | 8lb 8oz



Dear EEFC,

Thank you very much for Sienna's gift
and your kind wishes. We are all
doing great and enjoying life as a family
of 3!

Love & best wishes,

Simon, Elizabeth & Sienna
x x x

SUMMER AT STOURHEAD



WHERE IS THIS?

