



the magazine

FAIRTRADE

FORTNIGHT 2014

24 FEBRUARY – 9 MARCH



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Park united reformed church

March 2014

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The views expressed in this magazine are those of the individual contributors, and do not necessarily represent the views of Park United Reformed Church, so don't blame the editor.

Minister's Letter



7 High Tree Drive, Earley, Reading RG6 1EU

Dear Friends,

Lent is the period of forty days leading up to Easter, a time for us to prepare for the Easter celebration of new life. Lent can be seen as a countdown to one of the highlights of the Christian calendar.

As last year, I signed up for the '40 acts challenge' the idea is to carry out simple acts of giving and kindness throughout Lent. All those who have signed up on the website www.40acts.org.uk will receive a daily email from March 5th with a reflection and a suggested action.

During Lent we are also running a special Lent Bible Study group, which will meet in the Lounge, upstairs in the church halls. We'll meet for five Monday evenings from 7.30pm and we'll be using a study guide entitled 'Build on the Rock – Faith, doubt and Jesus'. Let us know if you are coming along so that we can order sufficient booklets for everyone.

During this period of reflection, we also celebrate Fairtrade Fortnight with a number of interesting events across Reading. This year marks the tenth anniversary of Reading gaining 'Fairtrade Town' status, which is worth celebrating as it shows the commitment of local businesses, of local council, of university, of local schools and churches.

This year there is a Reading Fairtrade Fortnight café scheme: visit 6 different Fairtrade cafés and you get a free drink, details are on the Reading Fairtrade 2014 leaflet. My thanks to all of you who continue to support Fairtrade and the campaigns for a fairer world, in line with the words from Micah 6:8 'To do what is just, to show constant love, and to live in humble fellowship with our God.'

At this month's Church Meeting we'll be bringing exciting news that four people would like to join our fellowship: Ruth Clark, Alistair Clark, Rahab Wambua and Alice Gilbert.

We are delighted to welcome new people into our growing church and I know that they will soon know many people in our church.

In this month's magazine you will be invited to help the elders who have already begun thinking about developing our mission here at Park URC. You'll be able to read about the ideas shared so far and we'd like you to pray about these ideas and to bring your own ideas to the March Church Meeting.

One of the strengths of the United Reformed Church is that we discern God's will together, recognising that God's Holy Spirit works in all God's people. Therefore, we'll be inviting you to share ideas and help discern where God is leading us.

As we think to the future, we give thanks to God that all our plans for the development of the halls and kitchen are on schedule. We look forward to the catering facilities being installed in the Small Hall, in preparation for all the work in the kitchen and David's Hall.

I'd like to thank all those who have been so busy in preparing for the work to begin. I'd also like to thank the many groups who have been so understanding about the potential relocation of their activities during the Autumn, it makes life so much easier for Julie (our centre manager) to know that groups are prepared to be flexible and use different rooms whilst the building work is in progress.

We are at an exciting stage in the life of our fellowship, with much to reflect upon and much to celebrate. As always we journey on, knowing that there will be challenges ahead, but certain of the love of God that is unending.

So this month, as we journey with Jesus towards the cross and beyond; may we know the challenge and the comfort found in Jesus words: 'Come, follow me!'

Yours in Christ,

Robert

Church Family News



Congratulations to Andrew Weston, who has been elected the next Moderator of FURY (Fellowship of United Reformed Youth), to take office in January 2015. Several of our young people attended the URC Youth Assembly in January.

We send our love and very best wishes to Olive and John Goodchild, their daughter Anna, and their new granddaughter Olivia Lily, who was born on February 8th, weighing 8 lbs, with our very best wishes for the future. We are also glad to know that the twin daughters of Ali and Matt Ball, born prematurely in December, are now at home and doing well.

Frances Lancaster is moving from her school in Southcote next term to a new post at Geoffrey Field Junior School in Whitley; Abby Jenner has a new job at Waingel's School in Woodley. Congratulations and best wishes on your new appointments.

We send our sincere sympathy to Sylvia Wise, whose sister died at the end of January.

We remember all those who are awaiting, undergoing or recovering from treatment. Peter Short was admitted to the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford for emergency surgery on February 8th, but is now out of hospital and recovering at home.

John Wise is still waiting for heart surgery in Oxford. Hazel Curtis has moved to the Parkside Nursing Home, and we remember both Ken and Hazel in our prayers.

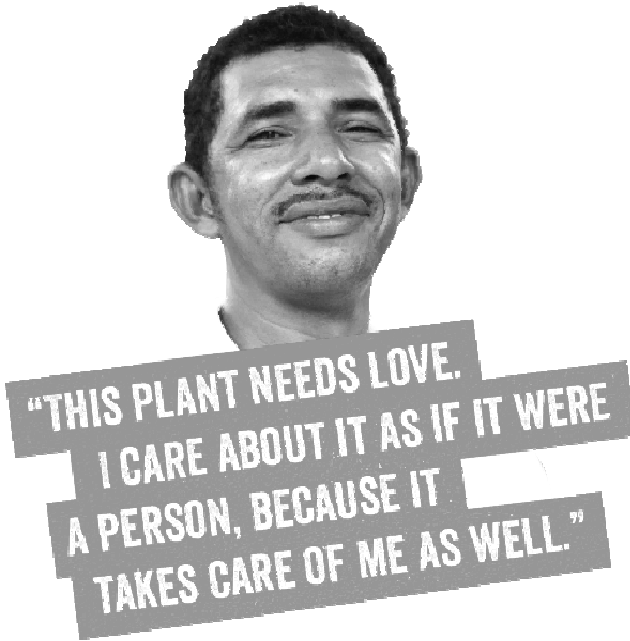
Neil Applegate is in the Sunrise Care Home in Sonning. There are many other people for whom we are concerned; we especially think of Elizabeth Knox, Pat Fuller and Mick Plummer.

We assure all these friends, and their families, that they are in our thoughts.

Doreen Woods

Who is Foncho?

Foncho is a banana farmer from Cienaga, Colombia. He's part of a Fairtrade certified co-operative called Coobafrio.



In many ways he's just like you. He works hard, he loves spending time with his family and has a passion for football.

Before Foncho's co-operative was certified as Fairtrade, Foncho often struggled to make ends meet – it was a hard life.

Now Foncho receives a fair price for his bananas, which means he can afford to care for his loved ones and send his daughter to college.

Foncho wants to help all banana farmers and workers like him to get a fair deal for their produce, so he's coming to the UK to ask us to lend our support this Fairtrade Fortnight (24 February – 9 March 2014).

March Calendar

Sat	1 st	6.30 pm	St David's evening with music by "Two Crotchets and a Quaver" - a fundraising event for the Halls and Kitchen development project
Sun	2 nd	9.30 am	Prayers in the Upper Room
		10.30am	Morning Worship with Holy Communion
		7.00 pm	Ignite! evening worship
Wed	5 th	9.30 am	Morning Prayers
		7.30 pm	Finance and General Purposes Committee
Fri	7 th		Women's World Day of Prayer Servcies:
		10.30 am	Church of the Sacred Heart, Watlington Street
		2.00 pm	Earley St Peter's Church
Sat	8 th		Wessex Synod meeting
Sun	9 th	9.30 am	Prayers in the Upper Room
		10.30am	Morning Worship
		7.00 pm	Ignite! worship
Wed	12 th	9.30 am	Morning Prayers
		7.30 pm	Elders Meeting
Fri	14 th	7.00 pm	Christian Aid Fish and Chip Supper at Wycliffe Baptist Church
Sat	15 th	10 am	Safeguarding Training with Phil Ray
Sun	16 th	9.30 am	Prayers in the Upper Room
		10.30am	Morning Worship
		7.00 pm	Ignite! worship
Wed	19 th	9.30 am	Morning Prayers
Sun	23 rd	9.30 am	Prayers in the Upper Room
		10.30am	SALT Festival led by Joshua Norris
		12 noon	Church Meeting
			No evening service
Mon	24 th – Thurs	27 th	Ministers' Spring School, Sarum College
Wed	26 th	9.30 am	Morning Prayers
			Last day for sending in material for the April magazine (pub. April 6 th)

Sun 30th 9.30 am Prayers in the Upper Room
10.30am Morning Worship
6.00 pm Holy Communion with a time of prayer for healing and wholeness

Friday Night Fish and Chips with Christian Aid

Join us at Wycliffe Baptist Church, Reading, on Friday 14th March at 7 pm, as we share food and stories of hope.

We will be joined by guest speaker Sarjon Toma from Iraqi Christian Aid partner REACH. This is a brilliant chance to meet together with churches from across the region and hear firsthand about lives transformed by love.

RSVP essential, suggested donation of £6 for fish and chips.

To book contact the Christian Aid Regional Office: Email oxford@christian-aid.org Phone 01856 2468218

10th Anniversary Celebrations 2004 - 2014.

Ten years ago Reading became an Fairtrade Town & Zaytoun was founded. Celebrations on 07 March 2014 19:00 at RISC 35-39 London Street,

In 2004 Reading became a Fairtrade Town & Zaytoun - the Palestinian fairtrade organisation was founded. Tony Jones, Deputy Mayor, and David Sutton, Chair of Reading Fairtrade Steering Group, open the celebrations.

Zaytoun founder member Cathi Pawson describes its origins and Director Tayhir Arbas explains how farmers produce their quality products. Join us for tastings of delicious Middle Eastern starters made with Zaytoun products, followed by a Fairtrade cake, wine & beverages. Free/Donations

Women's World Day of Prayer

Friday March 7th 2014

This service, written by Christian women, from a different country each year, is held annually on the first Friday of March. The selected country and its people becomes the focus of the world's prayers on the day itself. The first service of the day takes place on the Island of Samoa as dawn breaks. The world is then circled in prayer for 36 hours and the service is celebrated in over 170 countries until the last one of this special day takes place on American Samoa. We always sing "The day thou gavest, Lord, is ended" at the end of the service to remind us that "the voice of prayer is never silent".



The theme of this year's service is "Streams in the Desert". The service has been prepared by the women of Egypt – a country whose people certainly need our prayers at present, although the service was written at a time of great hope, just after the Arab Spring.

There will be a service at the Church of the Sacred Heart, Watlington Street, at 10.30 am, when the speaker will be Major Alison Hudson.

Our local service will be held at Earley St Peter's Church in Church Road at 2 pm. Members of several local churches will be taking part, and our speaker will be Mrs Christine Orme, a lay reader from the churches in South Reading. Members of St Peter's are offering refreshments after the service.

We hope to have a good congregation, and do not be misled by the title - all are welcome to attend!

Doreen Woods

Congratulations to Pauline!

Pauline Whistler became a church member on 29th Feb 1944 – and we'll be presenting her with a certificate to celebrate 70 years as a church member, on Sunday 2nd March.

Time to dream dreams

“I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions...” (Joel 2:28).

I hope you will forgive me for taking this passage from the book of Joel slightly out of context but for the purposes of this letter it works rather well.

The scene is an Elders' meeting on a cold and windy Wednesday evening. The Church Elders have gathered in the upper room to discuss and pray over the matters pertaining to Church life. The devotions were done, some discussions took place, and then Rob and I introduced an activity- an activity to dream dreams and envision missional activities which the Church and local community.

So, we broke off into groups to dream- to think about what we as Park URC could do to be a blessing and spread the Good News of Jesus. And this is what we came up with (particularly with a completed building development project in mind):

- Bring a friend to lunch
- Luncheon Club
- Student Lunches
- Half term holiday club (jointly with Anderson Baptist Church)
- After School Club
- Messy Church
- Youth Provision (perhaps including a youth worker)
- Fellowship time (e.g. Church lunches, bring and share, lunches for the lonely)
- Advertising (e.g. via big screen)
- Christmas dinners/ Sunday roast
- Area research to examine existing needs and current provision (why reinvent the wheel?)
- Leafleting the area/ promoting facilities to gain points of contact

It would seem dreaming comes easy once people get going. The noise from chattering Elders was a delight to hear as they explored missional

possibility together. But once bringing the group back together, and we had received the feedback from the buzz groups, we decided to test which of the ideas was most exciting and appealing. Not every idea in the above list received votes, but here are the ones that did (in order of preference):

- After School Club
- Student lunches
- Messy Church
- Youth provision
- Fellowship time
- Bring a friend to lunch
- Luncheon Club
- Area research

We went away with these ideas in mind and desire to continue dreaming dreams and seeing visions for Park URC's work in the community.

But it was also suggested that this be an activity for a future Church meeting. So, I invite you all to begin dreaming. What would you like to see happen in your community? What would you like to see Park URC involved in? How can we as Christians spread the name of Jesus in this area? How can we serve and love others?

Dream! Think big!

No idea is a stupid idea at this point. Anything and everything goes. We may only choose to do one thing well in the end (we may want to do 4 or 5 things) but your opinions are valued. So start dreaming and we look forward to hearing your thoughts.

Many blessings.

Joshua Norris (Student Minister)

Special Event at Lower Earley Baptist Church

Making Trouble Tour with Greg Valerio and Andy Flannagan

The British Church stands at a cross roads of opportunity or obscurity. With the demise in trust in our historic institutions and the failure of secular materialism to deliver justice, peace and happiness, the power of the gospel to transform lives, society and the wider creation for the common good rests in the hands of the Church. The Making Trouble Tour is about inspiring hope and demonstrating that we can change the landscape of the British Isles by hearing stories of one man's journey from homelessness to pursuing God's justice in gold and diamonds through campaigning for Fairtrade Jewellery.

This special evening at Lower Earley Baptist Church, Maiden Place, Lower Earley, RG6 3EH is on Saturday 29th March from 7.30pm.

Tickets are available at £10 per adult, £6 per student/under 16/ unwaged – there is also an early bird ticket £8 per adult if booked before 15th March

Details are on the website: spiltmilkbookings.com

Advance notice: Easter plans

Easter 2014 – Anderson Baptist Church in Amherst Road will host the Maundy Thursday service in 2014 at 7.00pm.

Therefore, it is our turn to host the Good Friday service, which will be at 3.00pm.

On Good Friday in the morning there will be a Good Friday Walk of Witness through the streets of East Reading to Earley St Peter's Church, where lunch will be available. Further details in next month's magazine.

Kitchen and Halls Development Project

Our project is progressing well, we have signed the contract with our architects Allen Associates, many of you will recall Ralph Allen

presented us with a feasibility study for the church premises, way back in 2005. Ralph has been instrumental in many church premise developments across the Wessex Synod including Thatcham URC, Woking URC and Petersfield URC. The quality of the work in each of these projects is outstanding and we look forward to seeing our kitchen and David's Hall updated and improved.

Before the work on the old kitchen and the David's Hall begins we are installing a catering area along the back wall of the Small Hall. This will include a sink and drainer, cupboards for storage of crockery and cutlery, urns, kettles and a fridge. The plan is that we will still be able to provide tea & coffee refreshments to all the groups that use our premises. The Elders have also approved the fitting of a dishwasher in the small hall to cater for those larger events – such as coffee/tea after our morning worship.

The current plan is that the old kitchen and David's Hall will be out of action for 12 weeks from the end of July. We are grateful to those groups that have agreed to be relocated to other rooms while the work is carried out. We hope that everything will be back to normal by the October half term!

We are grateful for the full support of the Scout Group who have been busy raising funds through cake sales. The Scout Leader, Will Nodes, has offered us storage space which means that all the Scout camping equipment will be safely stored while the Scout store is being upgraded.

We will endeavour to keep everyone informed of the project as it progresses, via the noticeboards in the halls, via this magazine and via the website. After many months of planning, this exciting project is taking shape!

Robert Weston

Letters

I would like to thank all the friends at Park for all their prayers and support over the lengthy period that I have been ill. Special thanks I would like to make to Rob, particular elders and friends, and recently Joshua, who have been especially understanding and caring.

I do appreciate it and hope that one day I am able to do something in return. Many thanks for all the flowers too.

God bless you all.

Pat Fuller.

'Southcote Alive'

'Southcote Alive' event is taking place on the weekend of 22nd/23rd March whereby they are putting on the musical 'Jairus' Daughter' and are rehearsing on the Saturday and performing on the Sunday evening and would like many singers to be involved.

For further details ring Elspeth Jenkins on 0118 9574903

Invitation to a Hog Roast Lunch

Come and experience a warm welcome, friendly atmosphere and a great Sunday service followed by a super Hog Roast lunch at Network Vineyard Church, Bulmershe Leisure Centre, Woodland Avenue, Woodley, RG5 3EU on Sunday 2nd March.

Service starts at 10.30am. Feel free to bring your friends, family and neighbours too.

Salim Yakub

URC Holiday Forum 2014: Growing the Church

Dates : Saturday 16th August to Friday 22nd August 2014

Leaders : Rev Rob Weston (Theme), Rev Mark Meatcher & Rev Melanie Smith (Worship) and Rev Brenda Stephenson (Music)

The theme leader this year is Rev Rob Weston, Minister of Park URC, Reading, where he has served since ordination in 2003. Rob was until recently the Convenor of the URC's Youth and Children's Work Committee. Rob is passionate about the future of the church as it makes itself relevant for every generation and we look forward to welcoming him to lead us on the theme of Growing the Church.

Worship will be led by Rev Mark Meatcher and Rev Melanie Smith. Mark is currently the Minister of the Christchurch Group of the URC which includes Burton, High Cross and Walkford churches in Dorset and has worked with Rob previously on a 'Growing the Church Synod day conference' for Wessex Synod in May 2013.

Melanie is Minister of Crowstone St George's URC in Westcliff-On-Sea in Essex and is Chaplain to Rev Dr Michael Jagessar, Joint Moderator of General Assembly. Melanie's roles have included being guest editor of Reform magazine and Convenor of the Commitment for Life programme. She has had prayers and poetry published in the URC and other publications and appears regularly on BBC Radio Essex.

Music will be led by Rev Brenda Stephenson. Brenda retired from the United Church in Dorchester in 2012 after 40 years in the ministry serving also in London and the West Country. An accomplished musician, she has led the Forum music previously and we look forward to welcoming her back.

Each day there will be all-age worship, a theme talk and workshops (discussion, bible study, needlework, photography, singing and others). Children's groups are also organised for those under 15. Afternoons are a mixture of free time and optional activities with an organised outing on one afternoon. There are also table tennis and scrabble competitions.

Each evening there is some form of entertainment, such as folk dancing, songs of praise, quiz etc. Early morning prayers and evening meditations are included. There is ample opportunity for free time, relaxed conversation, renewing old friendships and getting to know people from around the country.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner are generous meals. Morning coffee and afternoon tea are included.

If you wish to book for Holiday Forum 2014, please use the Booking Form on the website pages or email bookings@urcholidayforum.org.uk to ask for one to be sent to you.

Further details at <http://www.urcholidayforum.org.uk/wpsite/>

What Is A Fair Banana?

A fair banana would be produced in a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable way and consumers would have a guarantee that this applies across the supply chain.

So there would be independent verification that bananas are farmers are produced by farmers and workers who for example:

- Are able to sell at a fair price or earn a wage which covers the cost of a decent standard of living and/or sustainable costs of production
- Have access to fairly negotiated contracts, so as to be able to predict future income
- Enjoy labour and union rights and are free from discrimination
- Have adequate health and safety guidance and equipment
- Are maintaining the environment for future generations

Fairtrade Nutty Chocolate & Coffee Brownies

Makes about 12 brownies.

Ingredients

50g dark Fairtrade chocolate, roughly broken up
110g butter
2 eggs, beaten
225g unrefined (golden) Fairtrade sugar
50g plain flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
pinch of salt
100g hazelnuts (chopped in half)

For the frosting

100g butter, softened to room temperature
100g icing sugar
100g cream cheese
1 tablespoon strong black Fairtrade coffee

Method

Pre-heat oven to 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4. Grease a tin measuring approximately 27cm x 18cm and line with baking parchment, allowing paper to rise 3cm above the tin.

Toast hazelnuts in oven for 10 minutes (maximum) until lightly browned. Melt chocolate and butter in a bowl over a pan of simmering water. Sieve flour, baking powder and salt into a bowl. Stir in sugar.

Beat in eggs and chocolate mixture until well-mixed. Stir in hazelnuts.

Pour mixture into the tin and bake for 30-40 minutes until centre springs back when lightly pressed.

Remove from oven and allow to cool completely in tin. To make frosting, beat butter and icing sugar together until pale and fluffy. Beat in cream cheese and coffee.

Spread frosting on cooled Brownies. Chill in fridge for 30 minutes, then cut into squares.

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Our church website has details of the many activities of the Church, and of the charities that we support, it also has links to many more websites.

Regular Activities at Park

Sunday	10.30 am	Worship Young people's groups & Crèche facilities Holy Communion (1 st Sunday)
	1.00 pm	Church of Zimbabwe International
	3.00 pm	Newlife Celebration Tamil Church
	4.00 pm	Worship at Sutton Court (1 st Sunday of month)
	6.30 pm	Ignite Coffee & Cakes (in term-time)
	7:00 pm	Ignite Worship (in term-time)
	Monday	9.30 am
10.00 am		Monkey Music
1.45 pm		Mayfield Singers
5.15 pm		Beaver Scouts
6.45 pm		Cub Scouts
7.30 pm		Housegroup
8.00 pm		Bujinkan Martial Arts
Tuesday	10:00 am	Park 60+ Exercise
	10:00 am	Happy Feet Footcare (every 6 weeks)
	2.15 pm	Friendship Club
	2:00 pm	Reading U3A Yoga (every 2 weeks)
	4.30 pm	Indian Dance Classes
	5:00 pm	Street Feet Dance
	7:30 pm	Earley Folk Dancing
	7.30 pm	Shaolin Fists Martial Arts
	7.30 pm	Badminton Club (Sept – March)
	7.30 pm	Housegroup
8.15 pm	Aldbrickham Clog & Dance Group	
Wednesday	9:30 am	Embroiderers' Guild (monthly)
	10.00 am	Park 60+ Exercise (12 noon seated session)
	12.00 pm	Reading Lunchtime Choir
	2.00 pm	Reading Macular Society (bi-monthly)
	5.30 pm	Beavers
	5.30 pm	First Class Learning
	7.00 pm	Scouts
	7.30 pm	Mostly G&S Singers
Thursday	11.00 am	Zumba Gold (Age UK)
	2.00 pm	U3A Madrigal Society (every 2 weeks)
	2.00 pm	Active Ageing
	2:00 pm	Reading Abbey Trefoil Group (4th Thurs of month)
	5:30 pm	Brownies
	5.30 pm	Rainbows
	7.15 pm	Guides
	7.15 pm	Senior Guides
	7.30 pm	Housegroup
Friday	9.45 am	Zumba Fitness Class
	6.30pm	Pilots
Saturday	9.00 am	The Allenova Ballet School
	9.30am	Reading Seventh Day Adventist Community Group
	4.00pm	Reading Community Gospel Choir
	7:00 pm	Footloose Line Dancing Group
	7.30 pm	FIZZANG (Youth Club)

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