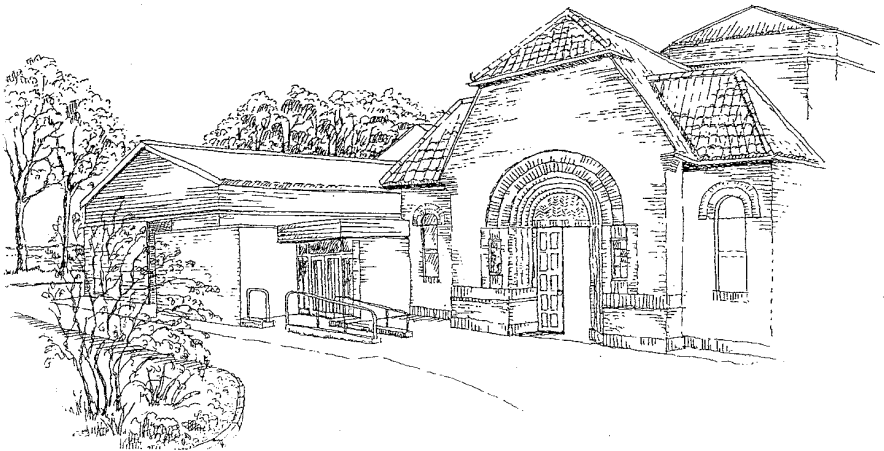




The **Sherwood**
**United
Reformed
Church**

1 Edwards Lane,
Nottingham,
G5 3AA

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The Newsletter

February and March 2017
Winter

One more step along the way I go

Ministers Letter

Happy New Year!

OK, we are in February and the year is well underway, but I hope you agree with me that it is better late than never! It is never too late to make a difference, never too late to try something new, never too late to change.

Regarding our own health and well-being, this idea is widely accepted. If you want to stave off dementia, diabetes and a whole raft of illnesses, if you want to live a long life, then the mantra is: It is never too late to make a difference: Try something new every year and it will help protect against dementia; change your life style a little to increase the amount of exercise you do and your body will last longer. But, in order to be effective, you have got to *understand* your body, and you have got *to want* to do it.

The same is true for our church. If we want the particular church known as Sherwood United Reformed Church to have a long life, then we have got to *understand* the church, and we have got *to want* to prolong its life!

It may sound obvious, but a long time ago I led a church meeting where we were looking towards the future, and I suggested we look at the question "What is the church for?". One 'old sage' responded by saying "Well, if we do not know that by now, after forty years of being in the church, there's no point! I move next business" and the whole thing was put back by over a year.

Through Jesus God calls the church to be a communicator of the Gospel. In order to be able to do that we must first know what the church is and know how it expresses the Gospel in its life. We have got to know *who we are* and *what we are*

about in order to be able to offer who we are and what we are about to others.

In this coming year we celebrate the nailing of Luther's 95 theses on the doors of that Wittenberg Church (thus igniting the Reformation – from which we get one word in the name of our denomination) and the centenary of the ordination of the first woman minister in the UK (a Congregationalist)

I hope we also rediscover what it means to be 'Reformed' and what it is to be a 'Christian', and what it means to be Church.

A Blast from the Past

Our journey down this road began last year with the visit of Alan Yates, one of our two General Assembly Moderators.

He was helping us understand our 'reformed' church: His theme was "People of the Way". It is our Assembly Moderator's joint theme for the URC as a whole over their two years of office. Here is my summary of what he said.

"People of the Way" is one of the earliest names applied to Christians. That name appears in the famous passage in Acts 9:1-6 where Saul is seeking to arrest any Followers of the Way - instead he became a follower himself!

We are People of the Way, people who try to take their lead from Jesus in the way they live their lives in today's world.

Moving on to John 21:1-14, where the disciples caught 153 fish under the direction of Jesus. Alan used this passage to explore **the purpose of the church**. It **is to embrace the whole world** and all the people in it, it is to be an inclusive church, a model of the Kingdom of God - that is the meaning of the number of fish.

One of the strengths of our denomination is the way we succeed in holding together in a positive way differences that could easily tear the church apart - theological, intellectual, social, racial and sexual. It is **part of our identity**. Sometimes, we might not agree with each other, but we will and do positively encourage each other, we **do not seek to pull down** those with different views, we will **continue to love** them. We are like this because we are seeking to follow the way of Jesus.

Alan then summarised some of the other aspects of our identity.

1. We are "People of the Way"

loved by God and committed to the Way of Jesus, people growing to accept for ourself that **'I am loveable because I am loved by God'**

2. We are a Protestant and a Reformed church.

So we believe in **"the Priesthood of all believers."** Ministers (Reverends) in the URC are not referred to as a priest - every member is a priest.

We do not need the services of any one human being for access to God – other then Jesus.

We accept **Biblical Authority**

This is written in our constitution: "The highest authority for what we believe and do is God's Word in the Bible alive for his people today through the help of the Spirit. We respond to this Word, whose servants we are with all God's people through the years."

We believe in **"Justification by faith alone"**.

We do not gain 'brownie points' from God by

'doing good'. Rather we accept the free gift of God's forgiveness given to all through Jesus. Any 'good works' we might do, are done in response to Gods love for us, and are inspired by that same love.

God loves us first.

3. We are a "**Free Church**".

"We believe that Christ gives his Church a government which is **distinct from the** government of the **state**.

In things that affect obedience to God the Church is not subordinate to the state, but must serve the Lord Jesus Christ, its only Ruler and Head." (from our constitution)

God is the head of the church, and not any person.

The Moderators (of Synod and of General Assembly) may appear to be in a 'top position' in the church, but they have very little if any personal authority. Their role is to chair the committees of the church.

So the URC is a **conciliar church**

- a church governed by councils or committees.

Authority resides in our committees, from the local Church Meeting to the national General Assembly.

In contrast to many other denominations, the local church has the final say in many areas through it's Church Meeting. (for example: the form of its local worship, who will be its minister, whether it will register its premises for Same Sex Marriages) Every member of the church is a member of the church meeting.

More thoughts from my Sabbatical . . .

As I said in the last magazine, one of the tasks I set for myself was to come up with some way of expressing the

Christian Faith that is accessible to people who have not particular connection to the church and who therefore know non of our language, views or ways. I failed. (I was quite relieved recently by talking to a colleague who had tried to do the same on his last Sabbatical – he had failed too!)

But I picked up a book whose main point is that the Christian faith is essentially about “Being Human”. On the whole in the churches we have converted the gospel into something academic. We often focus on the doctrines of the faith – those attempted explanations of who Jesus was and what he did. We delve into little details in the text and can easily loose sight of the story, and it is the story that counts. It is the story of the carpenter Jesus from Nazareth, of what he did and said and what happened to him. It is the story of how people came to see that when they looked at him they saw what God was really like – humble, loving, selfless, a servant not a dictator.

One side effect of this is that we send our ministers on to a long training course at a University or College so ordinary people in the churches begin to think that you can’t do church unless you are educated, unless you have got all that knowledge. So people leave church to the ministers and get on with running playgroups and lunch clubs. People are disenfranchised – they think they can not lead worship, they can not lead a discussion or a bible study while, all the time it is not the knowledge that matters but the story, their story (your story) and how it is inspired by Jesus’ story.

In general the Minister's story is very unusual, and streets away from most peoples stories – after all not many people in the country offer themselves up to become one of the clergy. But your story and the stories of most of the rest of the congregation are ordinary stories, stories people can

relate to – and that is extraordinary! Let your story be seen, and let Jesus be seen in it.

. . . and beyond.

I attended a training day this week, down in Leicester. It was led by someone from “Fresh Expressions” - the multi-denominational organisation (of which the URC is part) that is promoting different ways of being church. The day was essentially about being a church leader – what it means and how to cope. But obviously there were some stories (examples) about the church – what it is that we are supposed to be leading, and with those came some unexpected nuggets. Here is one.

Do you know that there are three ‘spaces’ in peoples lives? The first ‘space’ is “home”. It is a space we (usually) love to be in, but it comes with responsibilities and expectations so people like to get out of it from time to time.

The second ‘space’ is “work”. This obviously has responsibilities and expectations, and people like to get out of that as well from time to time!

The third ‘space’ is where we like to go. It can be the pub, a club, the gym, a coffee shop, the park. A ‘Third Space’ is a safe place, a place with no pressure or expectations, a place where people can just ‘be’ (where they can be themselves or ‘Be Human’).

Churches can be excellent ‘Third Spaces’. We already do this with Chill Out and Prime Time. We often focus on the service we are offering – the hot meal at Prime time, or the sandwiches and toys at Chill Out, but the real value is in the talking and the befriending – between the clients themselves as much as between them and us.

By being with people, doing some sort of (preferably common) task, without doing anything else we let them see a little bit of our story, and in that they will see a little bit of Jesus's story if we are careful not to hide him. At some point they might ask a question about that, about church, about why we do what we do, why we are like we are. Then (and only then) can we talk a little about Jesus.

Quite by chance a couple of the elders are thinking about starting an event for children / young people and their families (but not Messy Church!) that will be a "Third Space".

Can you think of any others?

We will talk about this at the Church Meeting.

So I am beginning to think that in my sabbatical I was starting at the wrong end by trying to draw up what would have been a 'Statement of Faith'. Just as the person Jesus was the clearest picture of God, so we should *be* clear pictures of Jesus in the way we live our lives. And we should let that picture be seen.

David

Thought for the Year

A thought for the New Year from Justin Welby

"if we are welcoming to those in need,
if we are generous in giving ,
if we take hold of our new future
with determination and courage - then we flourish"

Family News

We are sad to report that in the weeks before Christmas **Louis Bucatar** suffered a stroke. Although it shook her she appears to be recovering well and is still at home.

Kath Hughes has had another spell in hospital with shingles and mobility problems. She is back at home after a few days in Lings Bar.

Dennis and Betty Hartley are both attending a day centre during the week which is why we have not seen them very often. They send their regards to us all.

Joan France is now in Sycamore House and would love to receive any visitors. Just call and ask for her, you will probably be taken to her room.

Carol Foote is recovering from yet another chest infection at home.

Peter Smith Eccles is in hospital following what sounds like a severe chest infection. He and Karen will not be in church for a while until his situation is resolved.

Both **Pam Richmond and Mavis Seed** will be in hospital from the end of February for routine operations we wish them 'all the best'.

For various reasons many people have had a rough Christmas or New Year . We hope that as the nights draw out they find their lives lightened.

Please continue to hold these and others in your prayers.

Christmas at the U.R.C.

Prime Time is our older persons lunch club. We meet monthly on the first wednesday for friendship and food.

In December though things were different: We had outside caterers (Creative Flavours) so that everyone - members, volunteers and helpers could sit down together for a change. It was a proper **Christmas Dinner** - with Roast Turkey or Salmon - followed by Trifle, Christmas Pub or Fruit Salad. Yum! All rounded off with a cuppa after a few Christmas Carols and readings. Wonderful! Why not join us? Ring Pam (926 3310) to book a dinner.

We were delighted the **Beeston Big Band** kindly offered to perform for us on the 15th December. As previously we enjoyed a varied musical evening which also included interludes of readings and poems from the Reformed Players. A most entertaining evening which resulted £117.17 donation for the Church. Many thanks to all those who gave their time for this event.

Thanks to all who donated to the **Jericho Road Project** this amounted to £106.00 for this worthwhile work.

On **Christmas Eve** we held a **Christingle Service**. Before the Service Christingles were made and taken into the Church. To be lit later in the Service. We enjoyed an interactive biblical story of the birth of Jesus interspersed with well known carols.

Later at 11.30 on Christmas Eve we held our **Midnight Communion** Service. Welcomed by a mince pie and hot drink we prepared ourselves for the Communion and saw Christmas Day dawn amongst the congregation of friends.

The few minutes silence leading up to midnight was truly spiritual.

Christmas Day and we gathered together once more to celebrate the birth of Christ; A quiet moment of reflection to gather our thoughts before the excitement of the rest of the day.

Thank you if you helped in any way over the festive season.

The congregation over the Christmas period was somewhat depleted, some were away, and others were unwell suffering with Seasonal complaints and could not be with us.

Missing several folk reminded me of something John's Mum used to say when on a Sunday after tea the family would visit. If we had not attended Church that morning we had always "missed a treat". This was indeed the case during the Christmas and New Year Services.

Pam W

Articles

Our life is a book of chapters three
The Past the Present and yet to be
The Past is gone, and stowed away
The Present we live with every day
The Future is not for us to see
It is locked away and God holds the Key

Trust the past to the mercy of God,
The present to His love,
And the future to His providence.

Unknown.

Submitted by Mavis Kimbley

What's On

The Reformed Players present

Third Week in August

a comedy by Peter Gordon

27th, 28th, 29th April 2017 at 7.30pm

Tickets £4 on the door inc. programme, tea/coffee & biscuits

The action takes place on a somewhat run-down seaside caravan site dominated by the expert but inadequate caravanner Neville and his warring wife. Can a communal barbecue boost 'camp spirit' and restore harmony among a variety of characters also holidaying in the third week in August or do things really start to hot up?

Diary

February

1	Wed	11:45	Prime Time
2	Thu	10:30	Chill-out
4	Sat	10:00	Coffee Morning – Christian Aid
5	Sun	10:30	Morning Worship – Sheila Ashmore
8	Wed	14:30	Talking on the Way - Discussion
		19:30	Elders' Meeting
9	Thu	10:30	Chill-out
11	Sat	10:00	Coffee Morning – Christian Aid
12	Sun	10:30	Morning Worship - Pulpit Exchange -- Colin Bones
18	Sat	10:00	Coffee Morning – Christian Aid
19	Sun	10:30	Morning Worship – Stefan Janisewski

22	Wed	14:30	Light Refreshment New Zealand David
23	Thu	10:30	Chill-out
25	Sat	10:00	Coffee Morning – Christian Aid
26	Sun	10:30	Morning Worship - D.J.L

March

1	Wed	11:45	Prime Time
2	Thu	10:30	Chill-out
4	Sat	10:00	Coffee Morning – Christian Aid
5	Sun	10:30	Morning Worship - Lent 1 – Bev Kean
8	Wed	14:30	Talking on the Way - Discussion
		19:30	Elders' Meeting
9	Thu	10:30	Chill-out
11	Sat	10:00	Coffee Morning – Christian Aid
12	Sun	10:30	Morning Worship - Lent 2 - D.J.L
12	Sun	12:00	Church Meeting
16	Thu	10:30	Chill-out
18	Sat	10:00	Coffee Morning – Christian Aid
19	Sun	10:30	Morning Worship - Lent 3 – Sheila Ashmore
22	Wed	14:30	Light Refreshment Notts Archaeology Segelocum Roman Town Nr Newark
23	Thu	10:30	Chill-out
25	Sat	10:00	Coffee Morning – Christian Aid
26	Sun	10:30	Morning Worship – Mothering Sunday D.J.L
30	Thu	10:30	Chill-out

April

1	Sat	10:00	Coffee Morning – Christian Aid
2	Sun	10:30	Morning Worship – Kathleen Pass
5	Wed	11:45	Prime Time
8	Sat	10:00	Coffee Morning – Christian Aid

- 9 Sun 10:30 Morning Worship Palm Sunday – D.J.L
- 13 Thu Maundy Thursday
- 14 Fri Good Friday
- 16 Sun Easter Sunday – Visiting Preacher

Rotas

		Flowers	Coffee
February	5	Pam Richmond	George and Margaret
	12	Margaret McAdams	Pam and Doreen
	19	Doreen Fillingham	Karen and Peter
	26	Roy Musgrove	Jean and Christine
March	5		George and Margaret
	12		Pam and Doreen
	19		Karen and Peter
	26		Jean and Christine
Apr	2		George and Margaret
	9		Pam and Doreen

*Can you adopt a Sundays for the Flowers, perhaps to commemorate someone or some event, or simply just to support the church?
Yes? Please make your offer to Sheila Waldron*

Magazine Deadline

Please submit **your contribution** for the next issue of Church News **by Sunday 12th March 2017 at the latest** to Pam (926 8044) or by email to David (revdjl@virginmedia.com) or Stefan (sherwood.urc@ntlworld.com),

Regular Weekly Events

at Sherwood U.R.C

Mon	10.00 – 12.00	Line Dance	M
	6.00 – 7.00	Taekwan-Do	S
	5.45 – 6.45	FitSteps Health and Fitness	M
	7.30 – 9.00	Singing for fun choir (term time)	M
	7.30 – 9.00	Yoga Class	S
Tue	9.30 – 2.30	Toddler Talk (sign language)	M
	3.30 – 8.15	Emma Cain Dance Class	M
	7.30 – 9.00	Sherwood Women's Institute (<i>last Tue</i>)	C
Wed	10.30 – 1.30	Y.M.C.A Active for Life	M
	12.00 – 1.30	Prime Time Lunch Club (1 st Wed.)	G
	7.00 – 7.45	Zumba	M
	8.00 – 10.00	Revival Dance	M
Thu	11.00 – 1.00	'Chill Out' drop-in (<i>term time</i>) for under fives and their carers	M
	6.00 – 7.00	Taekwan-Do	S
	7.30 – 9.30	Reformed Players	M
	7.30 – 9.30	Beeston Big Band practice night	S
Fri	11.00 – 1.30	Stroke Club (fortnightly)	M
Sat	10.30 – 12.00	Christian Aid Coffee Morning	C

M: Main Hall; S: Sherwood Hall; G: Gallery; C: Church Garden Room

General Information

Minister: Revd David Legge, 0115 952 5759
Contact David for Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals.

WORSHIP

Sunday Morning at 10.30 with activities for children.
with communion on the third Sunday of the month
Check inside the magazine for special services
which may be at other times

Voluntary offerings maintain the work of the Church and details of planned giving can be obtained from Alison Taylor, Gift Aid Secretary (07757 311531)

Serving Elders of the church:

Christine Hyndman	840 2521	Pam Richmond	926 3310
Stefan Janiszewski	01623 750374	Karen Smith-Eccles	07921 468818
Sue Janiszewska	01623 750374	Alan Waldron	965 3283
Bev Lockyer	981 0960		

Church Officers

Church Secretary: Stefan Janiszewski 07812 975625
Assistant Ch. Secretary: Bev Lockyer 981 0960
Church Treasurer:
Pulpit Supply Secretary: Bev Lockyer 981 0960
Organist: Marita Chambers 962 5700
Magazine Secretary: Pam Whitby 926 8044
Flower Secretaries: Sheila Waldron 965 3283
Church Stewarding: Norman Parr & Pam Whitby 926 8044

Hall Booking Send a text to 0795 232 4912
or use the website: www.sherwoodurc.co.uk