

London Road Congregational Church

The Envoy



Church Directory



Ministry Team, Bible Book Club, Film Club & Pub Theology

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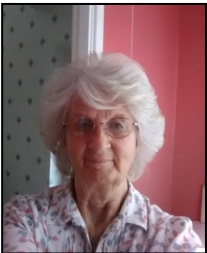
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If you have any articles or photographs you think may be suitable for our magazine, we would love to receive them. Please email them to the editor.

Back Cover: Upcoming ARKangel Event

***The deadline for submissions to the Spring 2024 edition of the magazine is
1st February 2024***

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Website: newarkcongregational.com

Facebook: London Road Congregational Church Newark

What is a Congregational Church?

A Congregational Church is one that believes in the Trinity — Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Congregationalists share and respect each other's gifts, and worship, serve and decide things together as guided by the Holy Spirit at church meetings.

There are three principles:

- A church where Christ is the head, with no external hierarchy
- A church based on a covenant relationship with God and with one another, where seeking the mind of Christ is the basis of all that is done
- A church where all members are considered equal before God, and all skills and giftings are valued and recognised

London Road Congregational Church Services

Services are now taking place in the church building for those who wish to attend in person, and are live on Zoom at the same time for those who are unable to attend in person. Services on the second Sunday of each month are held on Zoom only.

To receive links to join the services, please contact
newarkcongregational@virginmedia.com
or scan the QR code.



Please keep an eye on our social media or website for information about services in the church building. Alternatively, please contact the above email address to be added to our mailing list. Your email address will not be shared. A list of services up to April 2023 can be found in this edition of The Envoy.

Upcoming Church Services

03-Dec-2023	11am	Service and Communion with Oliver Kinchin, Congregational Federation President
10-Dec-2023	11am	*Church Service on Zoom with Mark Taylor
17-Dec-2023	11am	Church Service with Irum Anjum
24-Dec-2023	11am	**Christmas Eve Café Service with Mark Taylor
31-Dec-2023	11am	Church Service with Julie Hill
07-Jan-2024	11am	Service and Communion with Victoria Bunn
14-Jan-2024	11am	*Church Service on Zoom with Mark Taylor
21-Jan-2024	11am	Church Service with Sarah (Salvation Army)
28-Jan-2024	11am	**Café Service with Mark Taylor
04-Feb-2024	11am	Service and Communion with Mark Renshaw
11-Feb-2024	11am	*Church Service on Zoom with Mark Taylor
18-Feb-2024	11am	Church Service with Gary Clurow
25-Feb-2024	11am	**Café Service with Mark Taylor
03-Mar-2024	11am	Service and Communion with Catherine Booton, Congregational Federation Learning

** On these dates the service will be held via Zoom only. The church building will not be open.*

*** Café Services are held in the church hall. Bacon and sausage baps, croissants, tea and coffee are available from 10:30am (cost - cash donation).*



Mark's Meanderings

In autumn each year I have a performance appraisal when I have a meeting with the Deacons and they decide whether I've still got a job!

Many of you will have experienced these at work. The process is that I complete a questionnaire with my thoughts about how I think things are going with the church and what plans I have for the future. As part of this process I am asked to identify high points in the life of the church over the previous year; this is what I wrote:

- I think the online only Sundays are working better now
- There are two new church members
- There are two people from church on the Congregational Federation Integrated Training Course
- Establishment of the Preaching Group
- The Dave Tomlinson event
- Launch of Men's Group
- Trevor and Lorraine qualifying as pioneers
- The brilliant response to the harvest collection – including from the choir (see page 11)
- The choir being selected to sing for the General Sikorski statue event (see page 13)
- The average age of those attending is coming down significantly

Now of course a lot of this isn't down to me, but I think all those involved with our church can be pleased with the progress that is being made. I like to think that we are in a much stronger position now than we were a few years ago. For a small group of people we achieve a huge amount.

But the key thing is to keep moving forward.

Some of the things I want us to think about in the year to come are:

- Making a formal declaration of our inclusivity as a church, particularly regarding the LGBT+ communities;
- Exploring the possibility of starting a Fresh Expression of Church – perhaps a pub church – not on a Sunday (this would be different to Pub Theology which will continue)
- I want to write a short booklet outlining my understanding of the Christian Faith that might form the basis of a training course. You'll be aware that I don't always follow traditional thinking in my faith.
- To move forward consideration of making the main church a more flexible (and comfortable) meeting space.

Thanks to you all for your support. There are exciting times ahead.

By the way, and in case you were wondering, I have still got a job.

Yours, in His service

Mark

Craft Fair

On 28th October, we held our first Craft Fair in many a year. It was a very successful event raising just over £600 for church funds. There were 13 stalls ranging from tombola, homemade cakes, crafts and cards to jewellery, book cushions, bunting and bric-a-brac.



We would like to extend our thanks to those who helped set up, clear away, man the church stalls and provide teas and coffees. And of course, we mustn't forget all the people who supported us by turning up to buy the products on sale. Without you our event wouldn't have been the success it was.

Julia

Preaching Team

Our expanded Preaching Team have started to pitch in with leading our worship.

In recent weeks Rob and Jess, Richard and Julia, Chris and Victoria have all stood at the front and taken our services. For some of them it has been their first time, which can be nerve-racking, but I'm sure that if you were there that you'll agree that all of them have been very capable and thought provoking in what they have had to say. Irum is next up – she'll be leading on 17th December.



One of the strengths of our tradition is that our preachers are all able to bring their own beliefs and approaches to share with us. We don't all have to agree with everything that every preacher says. So the services vary widely in their style (Chris led worship in Sylvia and Godfrey's garden for example), in their theology and in their music. As a congregation we will all have our own preferences but it really helps if we can engage with whatever our preachers have to say and appreciate the effort they all put in. It's always reassuring if someone has a quiet word of appreciation or thanks to the preacher after a service.

Alongside our home-grown talent we have had/will be having other interesting speakers from outside:

- Mark Renshaw from our old church in Sutton-in-Ashfield. Julie has already signed him up for several more!
- Nigel Lindsey who came to share his experiences of being a missionary in Grenada;
- Janet Wooton the former Director of Learning with the Congregational Federation and of course the mother of our former member Paddy;
- On 3rd December Oliver Kinchin, current President of the Congregational Federation, will be joining us.

I hope you all agree that Julie is doing a great job in providing a diverse and interesting range of speakers for us — thank you Julie.

Mark

Events in the Church Hall

We are developing a growing reputation for putting on arts events on our premises.



For the second successive year The Pantaloons theatre company performed their comedic take on Shakespeare to a sell out crowd.

This year the show was The Comedy of Errors and the team of four had the audience laughing from beginning to end. They even coped with the problem of their stage set – a large door – being too large to get into the building – improvising with a glitter curtain. If anything this made the event even funnier. Pantaloons have already asked if they can come back next year to perform The Merry Wives of Windsor on 4th October 2024. Put the date in your diary.

Moving on to music in April we had a concert by Winter Wilson, a folk duo, who were also visiting us for the second time and we are currently planning another exciting musical event for 16th February 2024.

ARKangel (Katherine and Alan Clark) are an acclaimed Violin, Classical Guitar and Vocal duo who concentrate on Spanish and Latin American music. They perform widely throughout the country. Katherine and Alan are from Southwell and are well known to a number of church members

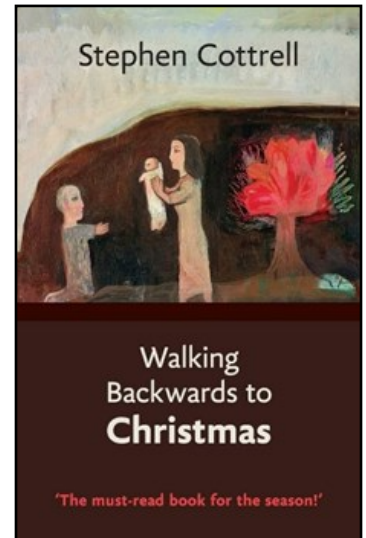


On 16th February 2024 they will perform a show called 'As I Walked Out...' based on violinist and dreamer Laurie Lee's epic teenage walk from his Cotswold home into the jaws of the Spanish Civil War. Violin, guitar, voice and spoken word are interwoven with the music of Vaughan Williams, John Ireland, Manuel de Falla and Rodrigo, plus the poetry of Lorca and traditional Andalusian song. Spanish snacks and a free glass of wine will be included in the entrance price of £15.

Booking early is recommended as places are limited. Contact Mark Taylor on 07954 172823 or newarkcongregational@virginmedia.com for tickets.

Bible Book Club

As Christmas approaches we have turned to an Advent book by Stephen Cottrell, the Archbishop of York, called *Walking Backwards to Christmas*. The older ones among us might recognise the title as being a song by The Goons.



The book takes an interesting approach to the Christmas story. It starts with the infant Jesus being brought to the Temple and the reaction of the Priestess Anna to meeting the Messiah she has been waiting for. It then goes back in time through a total of 11 people's stories, including Mary, Joseph, one of the Kings and one of the Shepherds, but also Herod, Rachel, whose son was killed by Herod's troops, and the Innkeepers wife.

It ends right back in the Old Testament with Moses. We're only halfway through and it will be interesting to see how the story develops though to the end of the book.

It's proving a very interesting read. I'll make sure a copy of the book is in our ever-expanding church library.

One of the great things about Bible Book Club is the variety of people who attend our monthly discussions. As well as people from our church we have viewpoints from Church of England, Catholic, Methodist, and unaffiliated people, all of whom bring their own insights and which results in us all developing in our faith. We try to choose books that are fairly accessible to read – we don't go in for heavy theological texts. I really look forward to our monthly chats. We do have some really interesting discussions (and the occasional laugh) while learning a lot.

If you want to find out more, or are interested in joining us if you email me at newarkcongregational@virginmedia.com I'll add you to my mailing list and keep you informed.

Mark

Harvest Festival Success

This year, London Road Congregational Church and the Just Sing Choir joined forces to make the 2023 Harvest Festival a great success. Together they collected 93.25kgs of food for Newark Food Bank. It was a tremendous effort and a big thanks goes out to everyone involved.

The Trussell Trust runs our foodbank, taking recommendations from health care professionals such as health visitors, staff at local schools and social workers. The scheme works through a voucher scheme, where a provision of three days of nutritionally balanced non-perishable food can be given to those in need.

Volunteers work in the warehouse where deliveries of donated food can be received on a Monday morning. The local warehouse is located in Balderton where the pressure on them to be able to supply this much needed lifeline grows each week. Also, through the foodbank advice is available on other ways families can support themselves, such as the use of “Top-up electricity cards”. Other agencies can provide information on a wide variety of issues, including ideas on balancing home income and expenditure.

Shops, schools, churches and individuals make regular donations to help the food bank meet the enormous demand put on them. As we are all aware, the cost of food has risen sharply over the last twelve months, and this in turn has meant that the warehouse often runs low on donations, so help is needed more than ever.

The pickup point for food is now located at 21 Cartergate in Newark, with another foodbank located in Tuxford. Opening times are Tuesday 3 to 5pm and Friday 1 to 3pm.

This year’s Harvest Festival was a great success, however, within a few days of the delivery of food, most, if not all, would have been distributed.

The members of London Road Congregational Church will continue to collect food for and deliver to the food bank, and if you would like to contribute through the church, we will be happy to receive your gifts.

Equally, there are many other ways to support this life saving, life changing charity, most supermarkets and food stores will help you to do so. Those in need live amongst us and while we cannot turn our backs on the millions of starving people throughout the world, we should never forget that our neighbours may also be in great need of help.

YOU'VE DONE WHAT?

Well, we have started a Men's Group. It's open to all men living in the Newark area, and you are very welcome.

For quite a while now male members from both London Road Congregational Church and Charles Street Methodist Church have been thinking about starting a Men's Group. All sorts of ideas as to how it might work, where meetings would be held, and at what time of day we would meet, were suggested. At the heart of such a group there was a desire for it to have a Christian ethos, but we didn't want it to be another Bible study or prayer group, we wanted something much wider in its outlook.

Eventually we produced the idea of a Men's Breakfast meeting, held once a month on a Saturday. It would start at 9am and be for no longer than an hour and a half. This way all those attending would still be able to enjoy the normal round of Saturday activities, such as shopping, gardening, and going to the local tip!

We are planning to have a wide range of activities, including guest speakers, conversations, and general fellowship, but at its heart is a desire for the meetings to be a space where men of faith, and indeed no faith, can come together and enjoy each other's company.

Our last meeting was on 11th November where we welcomed our first guest speaker, Rebecca Fawcett from the Newark Open Door Team. She brought along items from the Newark Resources Centre and looked at the town's role during WW1.

Our next meetings are on 9th of December, "Xmas Traditions" led by Mark Taylor, 20th of January "A step back in time", by re-living Christmas gifts from our childhood, 17th February & 16th March. All these meetings will be at London Road Congregational Church, usually in the hall, though as we begin to grow this venue may change in the future.

The group is open to all men of all ages, you don't need an invite to attend, simply come along. However, it would be helpful to know if you are coming so that we can plan the catering and know about dietary requirements, we do ask for donations towards the cost of the food. Simply email Richard on ricthevic53@gmail.com and use the heading "Men's Group" this way we will have an idea of numbers and what you can/cannot eat.

It would be lovely to see you at one of our up-and-coming meetings.

Just Sing! Community Choir

As I write the choir is practising our Christmas repertoire in preparation for a number of performances including:

- 26th November The Newark Christmas Lights switch on event in the Market Place (2pm) followed by a Carol Service in St Mary's at 5pm
- 9th December Singing in the Market Place (time TBC)
Beaumont House Carol Service (private event)
- 18th December London Road Congregational Church Carol Concert at 7pm

There will also be a surprise appearance in Marks and Spencer's Food Hall on the afternoon of 2nd December!

We will be performing some new pieces this year, including a lovely Epiphany Carol by Alexander L'Estrange alongside some traditional Carols and Christmas Favourites.

Do try to catch us at one of our public appearances.

The professional recording and video of the choir singing the Polish song about Irena Sendler that we performed at the ceremony for the unveiling of the General Sikorski statue is now complete. Please follow this link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F12fiZgMgAA> to find it.

Just to remind you – the choir is open to everyone. There are no auditions and you don't even have to pay to attend (though there is a recommended donation).

As with other things email me at newarkcongregational@virginmedia.com if you're interested, or look on the church website for details of our upcoming meetings and just turn up one Saturday morning. You'll be made most welcome.

Mark

Pub Theology

I thought it might be time to remind people what Pub Theology is all about.

The most important thing to say about it is that it isn't a Christian activity. It's open to those of all faiths and no faith at all and the more different views on faith that are represented the better. We have pagan, atheist and Odinist attendees as well as all shades of Christian belief. No-one will try to convert you!

Then what happens is:

- I'll provide a list of questions etc as conversation starters.
- We talk to each other, say what we think, ask each other questions.
- We have a drink
- We have a good time.
- We all go home a little wiser and understanding other points of view a little better.

The topics for discussion at our most recent meeting were:

- A restaurant in London is selling steaks for £750. Foodbank use is at its highest level ever. Is there something wrong with a society where both these things are true?
- Our prisons are full. Do we need more prisons or less prisoners?
- *'When I was teaching at a state comprehensive I often said to my pupils that the most dangerous word in the world is "credo" [I Believe in Latin]. It is being demonstrated now without a doubt.'* – Letter to the Sunday Times (22nd October 2023) Is it? (in relation to the Israel Hamas war)
- Other than The Bible (or equivalent religious text) if you could read only one book for the rest of your life what would it be?

As you can see they are questions you can have a point of view on without any knowledge of faith – let alone theology. But if you have a faith that's likely to influence your views.

We always find that there are different opinions about everything we discuss – and that's where the fun is. Other people might see things differently to us, and when we listen to them we might change our minds. Alternatively outlining our own views might make us think them through more clearly.

If you are interested in discussing topics similar to this all you need to do is turn up at The Prince Rupert at 7.30pm on the last Thursday of the month (except in December), go up the stairs and you'll find us. There's no charge – except for the fine range of drinks that The Prince Rupert provides.

Or send an email to newarkpubtheology@virginmedia.com if you want to find out more.

Mark

Environment

Winter is the time of year when our gardens are resting. If leaves have fallen on your soil don't be in a hurry to clear them away as they provide extra insulation and goodness for the soil as they break down. Spring bulbs should all be planted now and it's time to enjoy some winter pansies and heathers in pots or beds.

Wildlife needs feeding whilst there's an absence of natural food sources in the volume they need. Please remember bread IS NOT good for them, please use bird food, including when you feed the ducks.

Little dishes of water are invaluable for all our wildlife, including our hibernating hedgehogs, who may pop out for a sip and back again to continue sleeping.

Cover your lovely garden furniture to protect it from the rain and frost to prolong its life and put away ornaments that may crack in the cold. Enjoy a brisk walk on a sunny autumn/winter day and take in nature's beauty.

Julia

Mencap

THE AVENUE is a day service for adults with varied learning disabilities based at The Congregational Church, London Road, Newark. It is run by managers Sharon, Diane and Tracy 4 days each week from Monday to Thursday between 10.00am and 3.00pm.

The clients take part in a variety of activities including crafts, drama, swimming, music, games, humanities and much more! New clients are always welcome and carers and prospective clients are invited to come along to one of our morning or afternoon sessions to see what a great, cheerful and active group we are!

Sessions run from 10.00am - 12.00 noon (12.00 - 1.00pm lunch)
and from 1.00pm - 3.00pm

Half day sessions cost £18.00 and full day costs £35.00

We also welcome any volunteer assistance as well as guest speakers and entertainers.

You can reach us for any questions or to arrange a visit by calling 01636 707593 or emailing dianenewarkmencap@gmail.com

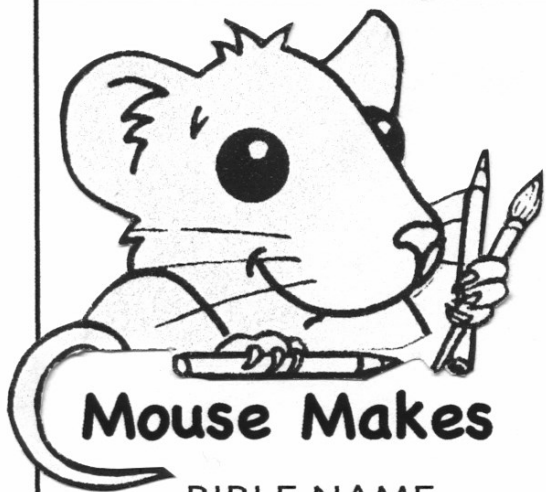
THE AVENUE

By Carolyn Brocklebank

It's really not surprising
That THE AVENUE is GREAT
It has amazing staff
Who we all appreciate!

There's always lots to do
Like, music, swimming, crafts
With so much fun to have
There's always lots of laughs!

4 days each week they're open
From 10 right through to 3
It's always full of action
So come along and see!



Mouse Makes

BIBLE NAME WORDSEARCH

ABRAHAM =father of many
 ADAM =man
 ANDREW =strong man
 AMOS =burden bearer
 ANNA =gracious
 BENJAMIN =son of the
 right hand
 EVE =to breathe
 ELIZABETH =fullness of God
 ESAU =hairy
 DEBORAH =bee
 DANIEL =God my judge
 DAVID =beloved
 GABRIEL = man of God
 GAD =fortune
 HANNAH =gracious
 ISAAC =laughter
 JESUS = God is saviour
 JOSEPH = increase
 JOSHUA = saviour
 MATTHEW =gift of God
 MOSES =deliverer
 NAOMI =beautiful
 NATHANIEL =gift of God
 PAUL =small, humble
 PETER =a rock
 PHOEBE =bright, pure
 JOHN =God is gracious
 PRICILLA =ancient
 RUTH =friend
 SARAH =princess
 SHEM =name
 STEPHEN =crowned
 TAMAR =palm tree
 THOMAS =twin
 TIMOTHY =valued of God

Eight days after he was born,
 Mary and Joseph named their
 baby with the name the angel
 Gabriel had given them.
 It was a special name
 for a very special baby..
 the name **JESUS**
 which means
GOD IS SAVIOUR

Read: *Matthew 1:21*
 and *Luke 2:25-38*



G	E	S	T	D	I	H	T	S	H	E	M
A	S	A	N	A	O	M	I	A	I	A	R
D	A	R	E	V	E	D	M	P	N	I	E
O	U	J	N	I	S	G	O	H	P	D	V
A	O	O	T	D	M	A	T	T	H	E	W
M	O	S	E	S	A	B	H	A	O	B	J
J	O	H	N	T	S	R	Y	M	E	O	E
O	T	U	H	T	A	I	N	A	B	R	S
S	H	A	N	D	R	E	W	R	E	A	U
E	S	E	B	R	A	L	R	U	T	H	S
P	E	T	E	R	H	I	T	S	B	E	E
H	A	N	N	A	H	Z	M	T	H	I	P
P	P	A	J	B	P	A	A	E	H	P	V
R	H	H	A	R	L	B	T	P	A	U	L
I	R	I	M	A	O	E	I	H	S	R	H
C	E	J	I	H	E	T	S	E	E	N	E
I	A	N	N	A	T	H	A	N	I	E	L
L	A	D	A	M	H	O	A	M	O	E	M
L	A	S	E	J	H	M	C	I	R	W	E
A	M	O	S	W	D	A	N	I	E	L	A
A	H	A	E	A	U	S	M	N	S	E	S

Can you find all these
bible names in the grid?

Does your name have a meaning?

Newark Foodbank Update



FOODBANK SHOPPING LIST

November 2023

**PLEASE DO NOT DONATE ITEMS
CONTAINING ALCOHOL – THANK YOU**

Shortfall Items

Also check our website for other items we need

Food

- Coffee
- Long Life Fruit Juice
- UHT Milk
- Tinned Meat
- Tinned Sweetcorn
- Tinned Carrots
- Instant Mash
- Tinned Potatoes
- Sponge Puddings

Other Items

- Shampoo

PLEASE!

Do not donate fresh food items without checking with us first.

Check that your donation is well inside its use-by date.

It takes time for us to process donations and too often they pass the use-by date before we can distribute the food to our clients.

We cannot distribute out of date food.

Items of which we have a plentiful supply:

- Baked Beans
- Feminine hygiene
- Tinned Chickpeas
- Pasta
- Tins of mixed beans
- Packets of Rice (dried)
- Pet Food
- Our warehouse continues to be well stocked. However, we are grateful for all regular donations, especially the shortfall items.
- Please take your donation to one of our many collection points in supermarkets. See our website for a complete list.



<https://newark.foodbank.org.uk/>

ActionAid Update

London Road Congregational Church has started sponsoring a child called Alagie Techno from Niamina West in The Gambia. Alagie was born in 2015 and speaks Mandinka, one of the many languages spoken in Niamina West. He goes to a local primary school, which is a 10 to 30-minute walk from his home. His family has access to a small piece of land where they can grow crops, and they keep livestock such as chickens, goats and sheep for a source of food and income.



While primary education is compulsory and free in The Gambia, many parents struggle to cover the extra costs of uniforms, materials and exam fees. These hidden fees mean that dropout rates are high and many children fail to complete their basic education.

The Gambia is one of Africa's smallest and most densely populated countries—a strip of land just 15 miles wide in some places and surrounded by Senegal. In recent years communities have experienced countless challenges; drought, heavy rain and floods have damaged people's homes, their farmland, livestock and crops, leading to severe food shortages that affect women and children the most.

ActionAid is working in Niamina West in partnership with families like Alagie's to increase school investment, improve access to food and develop livelihood opportunities.

ARKANGEL'S AS I WALKED OUT ...

Laurie Lee's epic teenage walk

From his Cotswold home
into the jaws of
the Spanish Civil War

...Violin, Guitar, Voice



7.30PM FRIDAY 16TH FEBRUARY
NEWARK CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH HALL,
NG24 1TH (ENTRANCE OFF HATTON GARDENS)
TICKETS: 07954 172823
£15 (INCL GLASS OF WINE AND SPANISH SNACKS)