**Newsletter and Calendar for January and February 2024**

**Coffee will now be served after each 4th Sunday in the sanctuary and in the hall on 2nd Sundays. Please stay if you can as this is a good time for informal fellowship.**

**Happy New Year to you all.**This year we celebrate our bi-centennial year - 200 years of ‘Chapel’ worship in our neighbourhood. Please invite friends and family for the celebrations and the special lunch on May 12th.  Do you have any items that remind us of our past that we could add to the Tony’s growing exhibition?  Please do chat to Tony, thank you.   Please see all the details Tony has prepared overleaf.

**We all send Kathleen our love and blessin**g for this important year for her and her family.  It was a joy to present her with a modest gift from the church to acknowledge and celebrate all she does for us and all she means to our fellowship.  God bless you, Kathleen.

**In this newsletter we include some of the dates for the year ahead**.  Elders would like to propose re-introducing our Summer Outing to the coast on 15th June.  Where would you like to visit?  The suggestions are either Brighton or Portsmouth.  Friends at Hampton Hill URC have been invited and are pleased to join us.   Let’s fill the coach!

**Amongst the Hounslow churches, the local Foodbank**is making a real difference.  After our Harvest gifts it has become clear there is an on-going need.   With all the groups who use our premises, we are now continuing to collect items for the Foodbank. We will be asking for help in getting the goods to the distribution point.  If you think you might be able to help with mid-week transport do please speak to Jane who has all the details.  To fill the box please keep bringing gifts as, if and when you can. Thank you.

**Elders exploring possibility of introducing Gift Aid.**A sincere thank you to all who worship with us for your love and support.  Your gifts of time, prayer and money make the church.  Our government encourages giving to Charity.   Our church qualifies.   The government system offers to re-pay our income tax to our chosen charity if we give HMRC the necessary details.   Elders think this may well be a useful addition to our regular income.   If you are paying tax, please may we ask you to consider filling in a Gift Aid form?  These plans are at an early stage and your views would be welcome.

**If there are pastoral needs or news, please let John know**while Kathleen is on sabbatical.  On the few occasions when there are five (5) Sundays in the month elders would like to propose having a service at our church on that fifth Sunday.  Is this something you would appreciate and be able to support please?

**Services in January & February**

January 28th Anne Byfield, Ealing

February 11th.  John Latham

February 25th.  Rev Anton Ball, (Isleworth Congregational Church)

**Looking ahead - some initial dates for your diary**

March 24th March - Church Meeting

March 31st - Easter Day Service led by John Latham

May 12th - Bi-Centennial Celebration - George Watt, (Moderator) preaching

June 9th - Church Meeting

June 15th - Summer Outing to Portsmouth or Brighton with Hampton Hill URC

July 14th - BBQ

October 13th - Harvest Festival and shared lunch

November 10th - Remembrance Day

December 22nd - Carol Service

**Hounslow United Reformed Church – 200 years of non-conformity (Independents, Congregationalists and Presbyterians)**

This year we are celebrating 200 years of religious presence in Hounslow (other than Anglican and Roman Catholic).

Originally congregations met in either private houses or small chapels. The earliest recorded house in Hounslow (for Presbyterian services) was in **1672**, with a licence to preach to a Mr. William Vincent.

**In 1790**, a house was registered in Hounslow for Congregational preaching. These two are the first recorded religious houses for preaching the gospel (other than Anglican and Roman Catholic). A booklet giving more details will be part of the display in the church.

In **1824**, a group of non-conformists met for regular worship in a brick room, at the rear of the shops in the High Street, with the entrance in Holloway Street. In addition to the congregation, at least 100 children met there to learn to read and write in the Sunday School. (There is a picture in the display.)

Three years later (**1827**), a plot of land, on the corner of Hanworth Road and Horsepond Lane (now Chapel Road) was donated by a Mr. Andrews and the building was built there. In **1835**, a replacement building was erected (which could seat 400-450 people). Some thirty years later, in **1865**, more land was acquired and the church was extended. The following year (**1866**) an organ was installed in the gallery, replacing the flute, cello and clarinet which had previously provided music for the services.

Further work was completed in **1900**, when the gallery was cut back to make room for a new organ (which is still there today). The other gallery was shortened in 1908, to allow for new choir pews, a pulpit and communion table. This was also the year when a new vestibule (in the Hanworth entrance) was installed. The present building is the size it was in **1865**.

Tony Fredjohn