



"Whilst I appreciate the thought, would whoever it is please stop tweeting, 'So far, so good...!'"



Romford  
BAPTIST CHURCH

# Grapevine



**Family Magazine**

June 2026

and

July 2026

**No. 238**

## From the Editor

This month we celebrate Father's Day, and while it is one of those days that brings different emotions for different people, it is also a day that hopefully brings families together, and encourages happy memories. We recently sang Graham Kendrick's song "Father Me" at church...

*O father of the fatherless*

*In whom all families are blessed*

*I love the way you father me*

*You gave me life, forgave the past*

*Now in your arms I'm safe at last*

*I love the way you father me*

Our Heavenly Father wants good things for us, as Psalm 61:10 says, "I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For He has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of His righteousness".

May we be reminded of the way that Father God fathers us, and may we seek and find comfort in Him as we lean on Him in all circumstances.

*Cheryl Schulte*

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## Current Church Activities

### Monday

12:00-2:00pm Foodbank (donations can be dropped off at other times)

### Tuesday

10:00am Needlecraft Group  
10:30am Amaze Adults  
2:00-3.30pm Treasure Times  
8:00pm Prayer meeting on Zoom  
7:45pm RBC Worship Team meet

### Wednesday

10:00-11:30am Parent and Toddlers  
12:00-2:00pm Foodbank (donations can be dropped off at other times)  
12:45pm Prayer  
7:45pm Life Groups

### Thursday

10:00am Thursday morning Life Group, alternate Thursdays (please call church office for dates)  
11:00-3:00pm Holiday at Home – for over 65s, usually termly

### Friday

10:00am Craft Group in the Meeting Place  
7:30-9:00pm Youth Club (Years 7 – 13, term time only)

### Sunday

10:00-10:20am Powerhouse prayer  
10:30am Morning Worship in the building and online  
6:00pm Evening Worship in the building and online



If you have any regular church activity which you would like to have included, please let the editor know.



**Our purpose is to take the life-changing message of Jesus Christ to all,  
with the goal that they become his loyal disciples**

Mouse Makes

"May the grace of the Lord **JESUS CHRIST** and the love of **GOD** and the fellowship of the **HOLY SPIRIT** be with you all."

2 Corinthians 13:14

V HIW VENLR SLAEP LG HALDOOR EMEWOR D PBREADW HLALPHA EEMCG JY RMEHOEK DMIRSST SAVIOUR PNESNSU OUNTLOT MESSIAH RLGBFIS KEOMEGA	O JYIAM ACGODJM LROCKUA MELORDJ IABBAGE GTDEBES HOYRFET TRAHATY YGHOFIEF VSWLARA OHEYENT JEHOVAH IKINGLE SHIELDR SAVIOUR	V UDE TRUTH THAHSRI OSPOWER ULFLIFE POWYNDR AWISDOM DBEPBVC VWTIREO OIEREFM CTRIFAIF ANNTTRO TEACHER ESLGIFT DSGUIDE THELPER
<b>JESUS • CHRIST</b> SON • SAVIOUR • LORD EMMANUEL • MESSIAH SHEPHERD • LAMB • WAY TRUTH • LIFE • DOOR BREAD • WORD • HEALER VINE • ALPHA • OMEGA	<b>GOD • FATHER</b> ABBA • LORD • JEHOVAH YAHWEH • ALMIGHTY HOLY ONE • SAVIOUR ETERNAL • CREATOR KING • MAJESTY • JUDGE SHIELD • ROCK • I AM	<b>HOLY SPIRIT</b> GIFT • HELPER • WITNESS COMFORTER • GUIDE ADVOCATE • WISDOM POWER • TRUTH • BREATH LIFE • ETERNAL • DOVE WIND • FIRE • TEACHER

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## Pastor's Page

In my former role with the Baptist Union of Great Britain where I served as the Head of Mission for some 9 years supporting the 2100 local Baptist Churches across England and Wales, we developed a resource encouraging Christians to engage in mission in their everyday lives. We called it Crossing Places:

***Crossing Places are where I am with non-believers with the intent to be, to do, to say and to think as Christ would in the situation with an expectancy that something transformational will happen. A crossing place may involve me as part of a whole church event, in a smaller group of which I am part, or on my own in my daily living.***<sup>1</sup>

We all find ourselves at Crossing Places in our daily living, whether this is in the workplace, in our social life, in our street or at church.

As we look at the calling of the first disciples with the promise that Jesus would make them Fishers of men, we see the promise that their living and ministry will be something that is transformational, it will make a difference and be for a purpose that has kingdom value. The same is true for us today, our very presence and being the presence of Christ where

he has put us has kingdom value and we can all be used by God. I am reminded of a cartoon I found in an old publication Scripture Union. The picture is of a cartoon figure holding a church offering plate. It has the caption "I only have myself to give God!" Crossing Places is not about creating a new programme, putting a whole load of more time into the church or organising a mission campaign. It is about truly giving to God all our lives, our relationships, our places of being and saying to God, "This is where I am in my daily living, with these people, in these circumstances, I want to be, do, say and think as you would in all these situations, and I am expecting something transformational will happen." This is one of those really risky prayers that could challenge all our priorities and sense of purpose. Giving to God all those work relationships and resources could see a revolution in your lifestyle and could be the beginning of an adventure where God uses your everyday living and in them kingdom things begin to happen. As the momentum of one Christian after another gets this vision, we can start to see transformation of communities really begin to happen.

<sup>1</sup> Baptist Union Council November 2009

In our Church life here at RBC, Crossing Places has a challenge. We have all heard the statement that “the church is the only organisation that exists for those who do not yet belong.” I am not going to try to theologially unpack that statement other than to say that the church is the bride of Christ and a living body. Rick Warren in his book “The Purpose Driven Church” says that the church that is healthy would be a growing church, in the way that a healthy baby grows and develops. I agree with this but would go further. The church that is made up with Christians who have given their whole selves to God as outlined above, and has activities

that are open to, and expecting the non-Christians to come and be welcomed to the church will see their church begin to be truly transformational and growing.

So I close with some questions

1. Where are your Crossing Places?
2. Are you open to seeing transformational things happen there?
3. Are there new places that could be your Crossing Places?

Ian Bunce  
Team Leader

## A Father's Love

As a parent, my children frequently presented me with drawings and pictures when they were young. This little penned illustration was drawn by my youngest son Matthew when he was just three. It's a drawing of his Grandma. She had it on her fridge for years.

It's not much to look at really is it? Not exactly a Van Gogh or Monet. I mean, you can tell it's a person but it's hardly going to be hung in the National Portrait Gallery any time soon.

But it was precious to his Grandma. And why? Because it was a gift from

her grandson. An honest drawing from a little boy who loved his Grandma. There was no other motive behind it other than his love for her. An expression of how he felt about his Grandma, a desire to please her. She accepted it with glee and threw her arms around him, thanking Matthew for such a wonderful gift and being so very delighted to receive it.

I sometimes think about God doing the same for me. My meagre, humble offerings in service which mean so much to Him when they



## BMS Birthday Scheme

### Birthdays: June 2026

Bren McSweeney  
Colleen Thompson  
David Thompson  
John Brown  
Christine Brown  
Jiela Bitaga



### Birthdays: July

Gordon Palmer



## Dedication 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2026



Karema and Micheal Kasa-Vubu, together with the Romford Baptist Church family, dedicate themselves, with the Lord's help, to raising Kiyomi and Micheal Junior in the way of the Lord.

## Smile Lines

### The Moon



But then astronauts visited it, and they say that the moon is really a big

For centuries, people thought the moon was made of green cheese.

hard rock. Well, that's what happens to cheese, when you leave it out.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Getting around

I love flying. I've been to almost as many places as my luggage.

## Welcome



On 5<sup>th</sup> April 2026 the Church welcomed Abiodun Oggar and Viktorie Osukuova into membership.

Left to Right: Rev Ian Bunce, Abiodun Oggar, Viktorie Osukuova and Jumoke Giwa-Majekodunmi

## Baptist Union of Great Britain President Elect Visit 10<sup>th</sup> May 2026



Ministers praying for Revd Alex Afriyie and his wife for a fruitful Presidential term 2026-27.

come from the heart. A few years ago, I wrote a piece in 'Grapevine' called 'Loaves And Fishes', explaining how I'd come to play the piano in church. At the time, I was so very uncertain because I didn't think my playing was up to standard but God was having none of it and told me to just give Him what I had. Which I did – and I'm still playing now.

Just like the widow's mite offering (Mark chapter 12), it's not about how much we give, either monetarily or with skills, but the motive behind it. The widow in that New Testament story is documented not because she gave a lot of money, but because she did it with a humble heart, simply giving what she could. In a similar way, the little lad who gave his lunch to Jesus didn't have a fancy Fortnum and Mason picnic hamper to offer – just a simple lunch of bread and fish which his mum probably packed for him that morning.

God can do much with so little. I have learnt over the years of my Christian journey to stop worrying about whether my offering is 'good enough'. I'm not the best pianist - or I'm not the

best at working with young people - or I'm not as good as someone else at praying. Just as Matthew's Grandma was delighted with his scribbly drawing because it came from her precious grandson, so God is delighted with our offerings of service when they are given with a heart which simply loves Him. Our skills don't have to be perfect. Our money offerings don't have to be something from a millionaire's bank account. Our offerings for God just have to be genuine with a love for Him, not for recognition by others or to make ourselves look good.

Christ gave himself for us in a selfless way which will never be seen again. And our offerings to Him should be selfless too, given from the heart. A gift of love for our Abba Father. Simply offer whatever we can, then watch our Lord and Saviour do wonderful things with it!

*'Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms'. 1 Peter 4 verse 10*

Sarah Jenkin



**The deadline for the  
August 2026/September 2026 edition of the  
Grapevine is  
Sunday 28 June 2026**

Please give any items to Cheryl Schulte, or email them to Cheryl at:

[grapevine@romfordbaptist.org.uk](mailto:grapevine@romfordbaptist.org.uk)



## She couldn't walk to church.

She couldn't walk to church. She couldn't visit the poor. She couldn't teach Sunday school or organize charity drives. For nearly five decades, Charlotte Elliott barely left her bed. And it was destroying her from the inside.



Born in 1789 into a privileged English family, Charlotte had everything ahead of her — talent, education, wit, charm. She painted portraits. She wrote poetry. She was the kind of woman people remembered when she left a room.

Then, in her early thirties, illness took it all away.

The diagnosis was never clearly named. But the result was unmistakable: Charlotte would spend the rest of her life as an invalid, watching the world move without her. Watching her brother preach sermons. Watching her sister-in-law organize charity bazaars. Watching her friends do the very things she ached to do for God.

She didn't feel forgotten. She felt worse than that. She felt useless.

Then, one evening in 1822, a Swiss evangelist named César Malan sat across from her at her family's home in Brighton, England. Charlotte, raw and honest, asked him the question that had been eating at her soul:

"How can I come to God? I have nothing to bring. I can do nothing for Him."

Malan's reply was four words that would quietly change history.

"Come to Him just as you are."

Not when you're healed. Not when you're stronger. Not when you've figured it all out or cleaned yourself up or finally become the person you think you should be.

Just as you are. Right now. As you are.

Charlotte carried those words for thirteen years.

In 1835, her brother was organizing a charity bazaar — raising money for a school for daughters of poor clergy. The entire family was busy helping: planning, building, setting up tables, preparing donations. The house buzzed with purpose.

The tale of  
the  
Salt  
and  
Light

JESUS OFTEN TOLD STORIES WITH HIDDEN MEANINGS

HE ONE EXPLAINED TO HIS FRIENDS THAT THEY WERE A BIT LIKE SALT!

IN JESUS' DAY, SALT WAS VERY PRECIOUS. IT HELPED PRESERVE FOOD....

...AND SALT GAVE FLAVOUR. IT WAS VERY USEFUL INDEED

SALT HELPED MAKE LIFE BETTER - WE TOO SHOULD HELP MAKE LIFE BETTER IF WE CHOOSE TO FOLLOW JESUS!

JESUS ALSO SAID HIS FOLLOWERS SHOULD BE LIKE LIGHTS

'NOBODY LIGHTS A LAMP - THEN PUTS IT UNDER A BOWL', SAID JESUS

THE WAY WE LIVE OUR LIVES AS CHRISTIANS SHOULD BE AN EXAMPLE TO THE REST OF THE WORLD.

JUST LIKE A CITY BUILT ON A HILL!

## Is the Bible political?

*Last year we went through a study series on radical Baptists of the past, and one character was represented as saying 'you can't separate the Bible from politics', but he gave no further explanation or examples of what he had in mind. So what does the Bible have to say about political issues?*

*In the Old Testament the Bible talks about: restrictions on the king (Deuteronomy 17:14-20), defence policy (see Isaiah chapters 7 and 30) treatment of the poor (Jeremiah 22:11-17, Isaiah 3:13-15), social inequality (Ezekiel 34:17-24), land tenure (Leviticus 25:8-17, 23-28, Isaiah 5:8-9), the right temple to sacrifice at (1 Kings 12:26-3 – a very important political issue at the time), and care for widows, orphans and immigrants (Job 31:16-17, Deuteronomy 10:18-19, Jeremiah 22:3). A good deal of this material could be relevant to issues today.*

*The New Testament applies titles to Jesus that the Roman Empire said should only be applied to Caesar – 'Lord', 'Saviour' – and speaks of the 'Gospel' (Good News) of Jesus, when the Empire spoke of the Gospel of Caesar Augustus. This was very political at that time but it is not an issue for us today. The ways Jesus undermined the authority of the Pharisees and*

*Sadducees (criticising them, healing on the Sabbath, etc) were political at the time since the Sadducees were part of the political system, as well as being religious leaders.*

*Jesus said 'you cannot serve God and Mammon' (ie wealth) (Matthew 6:24). Arguably this contradicts most politicians' attitudes towards 'the market' and 'the economy'.*

*There is a good deal in the Bible which either is or has been politically significant, but it is not always easy to read a valid political message off the surface of Scripture. For example, the Year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25:8-17 and 23-28). Originally it meant equal shares of land for all Israelites every 50 years, but if we applied it simply in Britain today it would just mean a different pattern of inequality. In ancient times almost everyone worked on the land but nowadays hardly anybody does, so what relevance does land tenure have to most people today? Or does Jubilee apply to other forms of wealth as well as land?*

*The Bible does sometimes have political relevance today, but interpreting and applying it are by no means simple.*

*Peter Feinson*

Charlotte lay in her room. Alone. Unable to contribute a single thing.

The old shame came flooding back. What good was she? What could a bedridden woman possibly offer?

But then Malan's words returned: Come just as you are.

So that night, alone in her room, she did the only thing she could do. She picked up a pen. And she wrote — not for publication, not for posterity, not for Billy Graham or stadium crusades or television broadcasts that hadn't been invented yet. She wrote because she needed to.

*Just as I am, without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.*

She wrote six verses. Each one began with "Just as I am." Each one ended with "I come, I come." Each one described exactly what she was: weak, doubtful, conflicted, broken. And each one said the same thing — God welcomes you anyway.

Her brother published the hymn in 1836. It spread quietly through England, then crossed the Atlantic, then kept going.

Charlotte Elliott died in 1871 at age 82. She had written over 150 hymns. She never knew — could never have

imagined — what would happen next.

Because nearly a century later, a young evangelist from North Carolina began holding crusades in stadiums around the world. His name was Billy Graham. And when he finished preaching — when he asked people to make a decision, to stand up, to walk forward — he always played the same hymn.

Just as I am.

For more than six decades, from the 1940s into the 2000s, that song played as people stood up in stadiums across America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia. Over the course of his ministry, Graham saw more than 3 million documented decisions for Christ — countless of them made while Charlotte's words filled the air.

The woman who felt she had nothing to give wrote the words that became the soundtrack to one of the greatest evangelistic ministries in modern history.

She never knew.

She came to God broken, bedridden, and convinced she was worthless. And from that exact place — from the rawest, most honest moment of her inadequacy — came words that told millions of other broken people the

same thing someone had once told her:

You don't have to be fixed first. You don't have to be strong. You don't have to have it all together.

Come as you are. You are wanted exactly as you are.

Charlotte Elliott: March 18, 1789 – September 22, 1871.

Invalid. Poet. Hymn writer.

The woman who felt useless — and accidentally changed the world.

Ru Lu

PA to the Minister (Team Leader)

## Wedding Blessings



Giving thanks to God on Easter Sunday for the wedding of Samuel and Bisi Arowolo which took place on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2026.

# Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in  
1 Samuel 17:1-50

The Philistine and Israelite armies faced each other. For 40 days, the gigantic Philistine champion, Goliath, taunted them.

