

# THE HADLEIGH MESSENGER

October 2017



The Magazine of the  
United Reformed Church, Hadleigh, Essex

## SUNDAY SERVICES

at 10.30am (every Sunday) & 6.30pm (1<sup>st</sup> Sunday)  
with Holy Communion on 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday evening  
and on 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday morning of each month

Monthly Midweek Service  
at 10.30am on 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of most months

## PREACHING ARRANGEMENTS FOR OCTOBER 2017

Sun 1 <sup>st</sup> Oct	10.30am	Morning Service	Mr Keith Berry
	6.30pm	Evening Service with Holy Communion	Mr Jim Clubb with Mrs Heather Brown
Sun 8 <sup>th</sup> Oct	10.30am	Morning Service	Mr Robert Dart
Sun 15 <sup>th</sup> Oct	10.30am	Morning Service with Holy Communion	Mr John Amos
Sun 22 <sup>nd</sup> Oct	10.30am	Morning Service	Mrs Janette Stevens
Thu 26 <sup>th</sup> Oct	10.30am	Midweek Service	Rev. Jack Roche
Sun 29 <sup>th</sup> Oct	10.30am	Morning Service	Major Alan Bennett

## SUNDAY MORNING DUTY ROTAS FOR OCTOBER 2017

	ELDER	STEWARD	REFRESHMENTS
Sun 1 <sup>st</sup> Oct	Jean Reeve	Marion Fidell	Marion Fidell
Sun 8 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Heather Brown	Ann Purkiss	Kay Watson
Sun 15 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Malcolm Brown [Holy Communion]	Malcolm Brown	Jean Reeve
Sun 22 <sup>nd</sup> Oct	Jean Reeve	June Gargrave	Marion Fidell
Sun 29 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Heather Brown	Janet Wimbledon	Janet Wimbledon

## FLOWER ROTA

Sun 1 <sup>st</sup> Oct	
Sun 8 <sup>th</sup> Oct	
Sun 15 <sup>th</sup> Oct	
Sun 22 <sup>nd</sup> Oct	
Sun 29 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Flower Group - in memory of Betty Rice

<b>ELDERS' MEETING</b>	<b>CHURCH MEETING</b>
Wed 11 <sup>th</sup> Oct 7.30pm	No meeting in Oct

### HADLEIGH URC OFFICERS

**Minister:**

Vacancy

**Hon. Secretary:**

Mr Royston Brackin (01702 558862)

**Acting Hon. Treasurer:**

Mr Royston Brackin

**Serving Elders:**

Mr Royston Brackin

Mrs Heather Brown (01702 557678)

Mr Malcolm Brown (01702 557678)

Miss Jean Reeve (01702 554907)

### Useful information

Address: Church Road, Hadleigh, Benfleet, SS7 2DQ

Website: [www.hadleighessexurc.org.uk](http://www.hadleighessexurc.org.uk)

### An invitation

We invite you to join us for worship and fellowship at any of our services where a warm welcome awaits. If you are in need of help that the ministry of the church can supply then be assured of our interest and concern. If you are suffering from ill health, loneliness or bereavement and feel that we could help, or if you would like to ask for a prayer or personal visit then please let our Minister or any of the other church officers know. All such requests are treated in the strictest confidence.

## Discerning the will of God

At this point of the year we mark two different anniversaries; 500 years since Martin Luther kicked off the reformation by posting the 95 theses in Wittenberg, and 100 years since the first woman was ordained by a mainstream Christian tradition in the UK; Constance Coltman.

Both of these events bear witness to the fact that the Christian tradition is not a closed tradition, but a living tradition. Both these moments bear witness to the work of the Holy Spirit working outside existing structures and ways of doing things to push back the boundaries of the church and to do a new thing.

Luther's reformation is an example of both continuity and change. In key ways, the reformation stands very clearly in the tradition of the church going back to the very earliest period of its life. None of the most significant, key doctrines of the church about the nature of God as Trinity, or the nature of Christ as human and divine were challenged or at stake.

What was at stake was where authority was to be found. For Luther, doctrine could only be established on the basis of scripture, not the later development of tradition in the teachings of the church. This was, in its way, utterly transformative. It led to a renewed sense of the immediacy of the work of God in people's lives; their ability to encounter the divine in scripture and through the work of the Holy Spirit in reading scripture.

Repentance was understood as the reorientation of the whole of life before God in the life of discipleship, not one particular sacramental act of penance controlled by the institution of the Church. Churches became regional and national, not super-national; ecclesiastical power structures were shattered.

Luther's reformation, and the traditions which followed it within which we stand, are not unproblematic. It was a lovely thought that if everyone could read scripture for themselves they would have immediate access to the truth. What happened, however, was that everyone read scripture and came to a different understanding about that truth.

Protestantism, as it has come to be known, has then ended up being a hugely divided movement – still to this day dividing over matters of the interpretation of scripture. Everyone seems to

read their own version of 'plain sense' into scripture. At its worst, it leads to a hyper-individualism – 'I know what is true for me'.

In fact, all the major mainline traditions that came from that initial moment of reformation in Wittenberg have ended up understanding that one does test our reading of scripture today in the light of the previous reading of scripture by those faithful saints who have gone before us. Tradition was not totally junked.

Equally, we came to the conviction in the Reformed tradition that when it comes to discerning the will of God through our engagement with scripture that is not about 'me and my bible', but something that we do carefully, and in love, together. When we discern carefully, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, in the councils of the church we believe that we are more likely to discern the will of God well, than on our own. That, mind you, is no guarantee that we will get it right!

One of the things we find is that when we gather together to discern the will of God through our engagement with scripture, we find things there that we have not noticed before. We find the new thing that leaps off the page to us that perhaps the context of previous periods of the church's life made it hard for us to see.

It is something like that which happened such that our tradition, and then others that have followed, discerned that it was the will of God that women were indeed called by God into ordained ministry. The Holy Spirit was not to be boxed in by human categories such as gender. This was not an easy piece of discernment for the church, and indeed some had to step out and go beyond the existing order of the church to make it happen.

Ultimately in the councils of our church traditions it came to be seen that Christian identity and the qualifications for ordained ministry are rooted first and foremost in our baptism 'into Christ'. Being in Christ defines us more than biological, social or ethnic categories; "in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is no longer slave nor free, there is no longer male nor female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

*Rev. Dr. John Bradbury*  
Emmanuel URC, Cambridge

## From the Editor

Welcome to the October edition of the Hadleigh Messenger.

We are usually one of the first churches in the area to hold harvest celebrations and a report of this year's harvest supper and harvest service is included in this month's edition.

I attended the URC South Essex Area Partnership meeting at Christ Church Rayleigh on 28<sup>th</sup> September where Alan Yates, one of our Moderators of General Assembly gave a presentation, Instead of talking about 'Walking the Way, as stated in last month's magazine, Alan gave a personal view on the future of the URC.

Like all the mainstream denominations in Britain, URC membership is falling at about 3.5% per year so you don't need a maths degree to work out that, if nothing changes, there won't be many worshipping Christians left in 20 years time.

I haven't had time to do a proper write up about Alan's presentation but one of his radical ideas was that, given the situation, we should use the money held in the URC's investments to fund new outreach projects.

Based on experience of visiting many churches, Alan considers that once a church gets down to somewhere between 50 and 100 members, it reaches a tipping point where most of the effort goes into maintaining the existing church, particularly the buildings, and there is insufficient

spare human resource available to undertake serious outreach. We have been in that situation for a considerable time.

One other worrying factor is that there is a shortage of people entering the ministry. So, if churches do not close or merge, each minister will have oversight of more churches. However, this situation could be relieved by the use of technology. For instance it would be possible for a minister to preach at one church and their sermon be broadcast to the others.

The magazine has articles about two people whose achievements are being remembered at this time because of significant anniversaries, namely Martin Luther and Constance Coltman. Hopefully, Martin Luther needs no introduction but Constance was the first woman to be ordained in a mainstream denomination in this country.

As regular readers will be aware, I have been looking at old editions of the Southend Standard as they appear on the British Newspaper Archive website. The promised article from 1909 about our first minister has been put on hold pending a visit to the Echo offices in Basildon in the hope of obtaining a better copy of the associated photo. Instead, I have included a transcription of an even earlier article about the second phase of building in the church in 1904, which makes fascinating reading.

*Malcolm Brown*

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## Bible stories

The Sunday School teacher was reading the bible story where Lot's wife looked back at Sodom and turned into a pillar of salt, when Bobby interrupted. "My mum looked back once while she was driving," he announced, "and she turned into a telephone pole."

Another Sunday School teacher said to her children, "We've been learning about how powerful the kings and queens were in Biblical times. But there is a higher power. Who can tell me what it is?" Tommy blurted out, "I know, Aces."

After explaining the commandment to honour your father and mother, a Sunday School teacher asked her class if there was a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters. One boy, the oldest in his family, immediately answered, "Thou shalt not kill."

Lot again... A father was reading Bible stories to his young son. He read, "The man named Lot was warned to take his wife and flee out of the city, but his wife looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt." His son asked, "What happened to the flea?"

## Wives' Fellowship Programme for Oct & Nov 2017

Date	Time	Meeting
Tue 10 <sup>th</sup> Oct	2.30pm	Talk on 'The Limbless Association' by Kevin Thrift
Tue 7 <sup>th</sup> Nov	2.30pm	Flowers & Craft with Carol Williams

Meetings are held in the Small Hall with refreshments served at the end.

Entrance £2.00 – first time free

Small coins collected for Rayleigh, Rochford & Castle Point Talking Newspapers

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### My hope is in You

My hope is in You,  
In life or death,  
In baby's eyes,  
In man's last breath,  
You're the hand upon my shoulder,  
The rug from under my feet,  
The walk I should have walked,  
The stranger in the street,  
My eyes when they won't open,  
The pain that's in my heart,  
The love that understands,  
When all is ripped apart,  
The glass that's never empty,  
The forgiveness in my pool,  
The mercy hand that reaches depths,  
The Saviour of this fool,  
The kiss you won't remember,  
The touch that can restore,  
The breath of blessing after,  
The knock upon the door,  
The stream that's in the desert,  
The vine from which I feed,  
The answer to the question,  
The One I'll always need,  
Because my hope is in You,  
My hope is in You....

*Submitted by Jean Hodges*

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What gives me the most hope every day is God's grace;  
knowing that his grace is going to give me the strength for whatever I face,  
knowing that nothing is a surprise to God.

*Rick Warren*

# WHAT'S ON

## A round-up of future events in the area

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Mon 16 Oct 2017 - CAVS Ways To Wellness drop-in at Hadleigh Library from 1.30pm to 3.30pm (3<sup>rd</sup> Mon of each month). Aims to improve health and wellbeing by linking you to activities and opportunities in the community.

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Thu 19 Oct 2017 - Poetry Reading Group at Hadleigh Library from 2.30pm to 3.30pm. This month's subject - WB Yeats. Meetings on 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of month.

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ditto - Hadleigh Gardening Association Talk - 'History of Local Cinemas' by David Simpson at Hadleigh Old Fire Station. Meet from 7.30pm for 8.00pm start. Admission: Members £1.50, Non-members £2.00.

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Sun 21 Oct 2017 - Organ Recital at Christ Church Rayleigh URC, Crown Hill, Rayleigh starting at 3.00pm. The recently refurbished organ will be played by four organists including Gerald Usher and Kay Duell. (Parking in High Street or council car parks.)

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Mon 23 Oct 2017 - Thundersley Community Forum Meeting at Runnymede Hall (behind council offices), Kiln Road, Thundersley. Organised by Castle Point Council. Starts at 7.00pm. (Note earlier time.)

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Tue 24 Oct 2017 - Noise Arts Festival - An Evening With Terry Waite CBE, talking about his time as a hostage in Beirut and his love of poetry. At The King John School, Shipwrights Drive, Thundersley from 7.30pm to 10.00pm. Tickets £8.00 - to book, visit [www.ticketsource.co.uk/thenoise](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/thenoise).

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Wed 25 Oct 2017 - Noise Arts Festival - Harmonie Concert Band performing 'Out of this World', music from the greatest Sci-fi films. At Thundersley Congregational Church from 7.30pm to 10.00pm. Tickets £7.00 incl. tea/coffee and cake. To book, visit [www.ticketsource.co.uk/thenoise](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/thenoise).

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Thu 26 Oct 2017 - Noise Arts Festival - Art Exhibition at Cedar Hall School, Hart Road, Thundersley, from 5.30pm to 7.00pm. Free event. There will also be a chance to buy refreshments to support the work of the school. From 5.30pm to 7.00pm. Free event.

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Fri 27 Oct 2017 - NHS Blood Donation Sessions at Runnymede Hall, Kiln Road, Thundersley, SS7 1TF. From 1.20pm to 4.00pm & 5.00pm to 7.45pm. For more info, visit [www.blood.co.uk](http://www.blood.co.uk). or phone 0300 123 23 23.

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Sat 28 Oct 2017 - Quiz Night, organised by 2nd Thundersley Scouts, at St Peter's Church Hall, Church Road, Thundersley, SS7 3HG. Doors open 7.30pm for 7.45pm start. Tickets £6.00 per person - to book, please phone 01268 752012. Max 8 per table. BYO food and drink.

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Sat 4 Nov 2017 - Noise Arts Festival - Firework & Family Fun Night at Thundersley Congregational Church, Kenneth Road, Thundersley. Doors open 6.00pm. Tickets: Adults £5.00, Children under-14 £2.00. To book, visit [www.ticketsource.co.uk/thenoise](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/thenoise). For more info, phone 01268 754731.

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Wed 8 Nov 2017 - Coffee Morning at St Michael's Church Community Room, St Michael's Road, Daws Heath from 10.00am to 11.45am. Enjoy a cup of tea or coffee with a home-made cake. Held every Wednesday at the same time.

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Sat 11 Nov 2017 - Coffee Morning at Hadleigh Methodist Church from 10.00 to 12 noon.

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More events listed on the HELIX website at <http://www.hadleighsex.info>.

# Harvest Festival

The church was looking a bit bare for our Harvest Festival weekend on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> and Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> September. On the Saturday morning, the church is usually decorated with greenery from our Church Secretary's garden but Royston was laid low with a cold so this did not take place.

However, the harvest table, positioned at the front of the church, had already been partially prepared by Heather Brown and more items were added during Saturday and on Sunday morning. Heather again made use of the knitted fruit and vegetables made by my mum, Shirley.



**Harvest table**

On the Saturday morning, Heather and Jean Reeve prepared the tables in the Small Hall for the supper. In the afternoon, they prepared the food with the help of Kay Watson.

Twenty-five people came to the Harvest Supper. It was nice to have Enid Rundle with us and Irene Harrington, Mary Hawthorne and Christine Cherrett from the Wives' Fellowship. We were also joined by Rev. Jack Roche, Ann Lowes, and Derek and Emily Simpson (nee Davies), who were married a few weeks ago.

After supper, everyone moved into the church for the entertainment. This began with the hymn 'For the fruits of his creation'. I then showed three

videos about Water Aid, as it had been decided that surplus donations from the retiring offertory would be sent to that charity.

After the videos, June Gargrave read three poems entitled 'Beyond Alice Springs', 'Weathers' by Thomas Hardy and an extract from 'The Cloud' by Percy Bysshe Shelley. I then played two more videos. One featured the well-known actor Damien Price reading 'The Harvest' by Henry Birtles in Westminster Abbey and the other – a bit a fun – was a totally unrelated video of a 98-year-old lady named Lois Cunningham playing 'How great thou art' on piano at the Grand Ole Opry.

We were then treated to a rendition by Heather of part of Chopin's Fantaisie Impromptu, later used in the song 'I'm Always Chasing Rainbows'. The evening ended with singing of the hymn 'Now thank we all our god'. Before Jack said a closing prayer, he pointed out that Martin Rinckart's hymn arose out of the Thirty Years War in Germany and was sung when the Peace of Westphalia was signed in 1648.

On Sunday, our Harvest Festival service was led by Major Geoff Ashdown from the Salvation Army. Geoff was fooled by some of the knitted produce on the harvest table – particularly the mushrooms – but pointed out that there were a couple of things missing. He then proceeded to produce a lump of coal and a bag of salt from his briefcase!

The fresh produce on the harvest table was later taken to Little Havens Hospice, where the staff were very pleased to receive it all. The other items were included in the following Sunday's collection for Hopeworx. The lady who later collected those donations was very pleased to receive so many bags and asked that her thanks on behalf of Hopeworx be passed on.

*Malcolm Brown*

## Some of the Harvest Supper attendees



**Irene, June, Keith, Vera,  
Mary H, Mary M**



**Enid, Ann, Pamela, Peggy, Norma,  
Christine, Paul**



**Doreen, Margaret, Jim, Ann, Marion,  
Emily, Derek**

# Martin Luther

On 31<sup>st</sup> October 1517, according to legend, Martin Luther pinned his 95 theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg in an action that is seen as the starting point of the Reformation.

Luther was born on 10<sup>th</sup> November 1483 in Eisleben, Saxony, then part of the Holy Roman Empire, to Margaret and Hans Luder (as it was locally pronounced). He was raised in Mansfeld, where his father managed several copper mines.

Luther studied at the local school before being transferred to a school in Magdeburg in 1497. In 1498, he transferred again to a school in Eisenach. In 1501 he entered the University of Erfurt and received his Master's degree in 1505. He proved so adept at public debates that he earned the nickname "The Philosopher."



Martin Luther

On 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1505, Luther's life took a dramatic turn. As he fought his way through a severe thunderstorm on the road to Erfurt, a bolt of lightning struck the ground near him. "Help me, St. Anne!" Luther screamed. "I will become a monk!"

Luther fulfilled this vow by giving away all his possessions and entering the Augustinian Monastery in the city of Erfurt on 17<sup>th</sup> July 1505. He plunged into prayer, fasting, and ascetic practices – going without sleep, enduring bone-chilling cold without a blanket, and flagellating himself. As he later commented, "If anyone could have earned heaven by the life of a monk, it was I."

In 1507, Luther was ordained as a priest and in 1508 he became a teacher in the University of Wittenberg's theology department. During his free time, he also studied under superior monks, earning Bachelor's Degrees in Biblical Studies and in Theology. On 19<sup>th</sup> October 1512, he

earned a Doctor of Theology degree, completing his academic career.

During his early years, whenever Luther read what would become the famous "Reformation text" – Romans 1:17 – his eyes were drawn not to the word faith, but to the word righteous. Who, after all, could "live by faith" but those who were already righteous? The text was clear on the matter: "the righteous shall live by faith."

Luther remarked, "I hated that word, 'the righteousness of God,' by which I had been taught according to the custom and use of all teachers ... [that] God is righteous and punishes the unrighteous sinner." The young Luther could not live by faith because he was not righteous – and he knew it.

During lectures on the Psalms (in 1513 and 1514) and a study of the Book of Romans, he began to see a way through his dilemma. "At last meditating day and night, by the mercy of God, I ... began to understand that the righteousness of God is that through which the righteous live by a gift of God, namely by faith... Here I felt as if I were entirely born again and had entered paradise itself through the gates that had been flung open."

On the heels of this new understanding came others. To Luther the church was no longer the institution defined by apostolic succession; instead it was the community of those who had been given faith. Salvation came not by the sacraments as such but by faith. The idea that human beings had a spark of goodness (enough to seek out God) was not a foundation of theology but was taught only by "fools." Humility was no longer a virtue that earned grace but a necessary response to the gift of grace. Faith no longer consisted of assenting to the church's teachings but of trusting the promises of God and the merits of Christ.

It wasn't long before the revolution in Luther's heart and mind played itself out in all of Europe. It started on All Saints' Eve, 1517, when Luther publicly objected to the way preacher Johann Tetzel was selling indulgences. These were documents prepared by the church and bought by individuals either for themselves or on behalf of the dead that would release them from punishment due to their sins.



Luther questioned the church's trafficking in indulgences and called for a public debate of 95 theses he had written. Instead, his 95 Theses spread across Germany as a call to reform, and the issue quickly became not indulgences but the authority of the church: Did the pope have the right to issue indulgences?

Events quickly accelerated. At a public debate in Leipzig in 1519, when Luther declared that "a simple layman armed with the Scriptures" was superior to both pope and councils without them, he was threatened with excommunication.

Luther replied to the threat with his three most important treatises: The Address to the Christian Nobility, The Babylonian Captivity of the Church, and On the Freedom of a Christian. In the first, he argued that all Christians were priests, and he urged rulers to take up the cause of church reform. In the second, he reduced the seven sacraments to two (baptism and the Lord's Supper). In the third, he told Christians they were free from the law (especially church laws) but bound in love to their neighbours.

In 1521 he was called to an assembly at Worms, Germany, to appear before Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor. Luther arrived prepared for another debate; he quickly discovered it was a trial at which he was asked to recant his views.

Luther replied, "Unless I can be instructed and convinced with evidence from the Holy Scriptures or with open, clear, and distinct grounds of reasoning ... then I cannot and will not recant, because it is neither safe nor wise to act against conscience." Then he added, "Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me! Amen."

By the time an imperial edict calling Luther "a convicted heretic" was issued, he had escaped to Wartburg Castle, where he hid for ten months.

In early spring of 1522, he was able to return to Wittenberg to lead, with the help of men like Philip Melancthon, the fledgling reform movement.

Over the next years, Luther entered into more disputes, many of which divided friends and enemies. When unrest resulted in the Peasants' War of 1524–1525, he condemned the peasants and exhorted the princes to crush the revolt.

He married a runaway nun, Katharina von Bora, which scandalized many. (For Luther, the shock was waking up in the morning with "pigtales on the pillow next to me.")

He mocked fellow reformers, especially Swiss reformer Ulrich Zwingli, and used vulgar language in doing so.

Nonetheless, his lasting accomplishments also mounted: the translation of the Bible into German (which remains a literary and biblical hallmark); the writing of the hymn "A Mighty Fortress is Our God"; and publishing his Larger and Smaller Catechism, which have guided not just Lutherans but many others since.

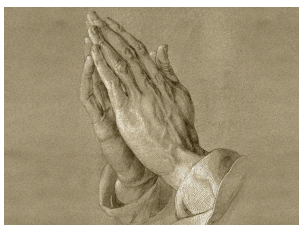
His later years were spent often in both illness and furious activity. In 1531, though he was sick for six months and suffered from exhaustion, he preached 180 sermons, wrote 15 tracts, worked on his Old Testament translation, and took a number of trips. But his body eventually gave up and he died on 18 February 1546, at the age of 62, of a suspected heart attack.

Luther's legacy is huge; every Protestant Reformer – like Calvin, Zwingli, Knox, and Cranmer – and every Protestant stream – Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican, and Anabaptist – was inspired by Luther in one way or another. On a larger canvas, his reform unleashed forces that ended the Middle Ages and ushered in the modern era.

It has been said that in most libraries, books by and about Martin Luther occupy more shelves than those concerned with any other figure except Jesus of Nazareth. Though difficult to verify, one can understand why it is likely to be true.

Based on information on the URC, Christianity Today and freeinfosociety websites.

## Luther's Morning Prayer



"I thank you, my Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen."

## The Constance Coltman century

### The story of the first woman to be ordained in a mainstream British denomination

Constance Todd was ordained at a dark moment during the First World War. In Belgium, the third battle of Ypres was bogged down in the mud around the village of Passchendaele as the toll of death and injury for both sides mounted. On the home front there were German air raids in London, food and fuel shortages, labour unrest and transport problems. It must have seemed to many people as though the war would never end.



A ray of light in the darkness shone out from the unusual ordination service at the King's Weigh House, a Congregational church just off Oxford Street in London. Some people realised this was a highly significant event with far reaching effects for the Christian Church, while others saw it as another example of women being needed to step into men's shoes. The shortage of manpower caused by the war meant that women were already doing many jobs which had previously been seen as male preserves. Some people were asking why such an opening up of opportunities should not extend to ministry in the Church.

There can be little doubt that Constance and her fiancé Claud, who was ordained alongside her, knew they were taking part in a historic moment of deep religious as well as social significance. They had both trained for ministry. They became engaged to each other, and volunteered to work side-by-side in the East End mission church supported by the King's Weigh House. Constance had begun exploring her vocation within the Presbyterian Church of England but when she met resistance turned to Mansfield College, Oxford. Dr Selbie, the principal, saw God at work in her and admitted her to the ministerial training course in 1913. He would no doubt have explained to her that the college's Congregational identity meant that being trained did not guarantee ordination at the end of the course.

The presiding minister at her ordination in 1917, WE Orchard, was a high-profile and controversial minister, about whom opinions were deeply divided. An outspoken pacifist, lover of High Church liturgy and preacher of the social gospel, he was also a champion of women's ministry. Three other Congregational ministers joined him in the ordination ceremony. The next day, Claud and Constance were married. At a time when women were expected to give up paid work on their marriage and retire into domesticity, this order of events sent a clear message that Constance saw her call to ministry as taking precedence over her married status.

Her intellect and strength would have singled Constance out in any community she joined. She had been born in 1889 and grew up in Putney, west London, the eldest of four children. After being educated at the all-girl, private St Felix School in Southwold, Suffolk, she won an exhibition to read history at Somerville College, Oxford from 1908 to 1911. Her early years in an upper middle-class family gave her a lifelong love of art, literature, learning and travel.

During her ministerial training, Constance entered fully into college life and won the acceptance of male fellow students. The cases of feminism, pacifism and women's suffrage were important to her, coupled with a delight in elaborate ritual and forms of worship that some would have considered nearer to Rome than nonconformity.

After her ordination, it took the Congregational Union of England and Wales several months to agree that the service on 17 September had been in order. Once that agreement was reached, an induction service took place for Constance at Darby Street Mission in Wapping, in December 1917. On this occasion, unlike her ordination, Dr Selbie was present. The reasons for his earlier absence are unclear but may have been due to concern that the pioneering service had not had proper prior approval from the London Congregational Board.

Constance and Claud Coltman shared a strong desire to serve the Church in areas of deprivation and stress but this must have come at a cost. With her privileged background, and being used to the presence of domestic servants, Constance must have found life in the East End of London during

the First World War an enormous physical and emotional shock. Perhaps this explains why her time in ministry at Darby Street was surprisingly short – about 18 months – though Claud remained in post two years longer.

Next, they served in another sacrificial ministry, trying and failing to revive the church at Greville Place, Kilburn, and then moving to Cowley Road, Oxford where they had their family of two daughters and a son. They then served in Wolverton, and next Haverhill, dividing the roles in ministry so Constance specialised in baptisms, some weddings and visiting young mothers. She studied midwifery and birth control, as well as writing a regular column of spiritual advice for *The Sunday at Home* journal in the inter-war years.

Active within the Fellowship of Reconciliation and a founder member of Christian CND, Constance also supported and encouraged other women seeking ordained ministry. In retirement, she learned Swedish so as to help women seeking ordination in the Church of Sweden. She died in 1969 leaving no personal papers.

Constance Coltman was one of the first cohort of women to enter Congregational ministry. There were 18 more women ordained before the Second World War but Constance was the only one who

managed to combine marriage, motherhood and ministry. This was partly helped by her private means, which allowed her to subsidise the home while she and Claud managed on one stipend between them.

There are some parts of Constance's story that may not fit our expectations. We may be disappointed to discover that she came from a privileged background. It may challenge our assumptions that she seems to have done more pastoral ministry than chairing of meetings. We might wish that she had been less High Church in her preferred worship style. None of this matters by comparison with the amazing example of pioneering ministry she gives us, founded above all on a sense of call from God that ultimately overcame every obstacle.

*Kirsty Thorpe*

Published in *Reform*, September 2017

Editor's note: A short film has of Constance Coltman's life, simply entitled 'Constance', has been made by Kevin Snyman, a film maker and Mission Enabler for West Midlands Synod. The film received its first screening at URC Church House in London on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2015. The film is available for viewing on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PpFfb8Qhpgl>.

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## Centenary celebrations

The United Reformed Church has been at the heart of celebrations marking the centenary of Constance Coltman's ordination and its legacy. Between Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September, leaders in women's ministry from around the world attended the *Women of the Way: Global Pioneers'* conference at Church House.

On Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September, more than 40 people attended a public lecture at the Dr Williams Library, Gordon Square, London, to hear the Rev. Dr. Kirsty Thorpe, United Reformed Minister and historian, along with two guest speakers, discuss issues affecting women in the Church today. Speaking about her vision for women's ministry, Dr Thorpe said: 'My hope is that the Church can get to a place where women and men's gifts are used for the life and flourishing of congregations wherever they are called. At the moment, it feels that ministry is a very difficult place to be for women and men but doubly difficult for women.'

On Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September, a special thanksgiving service, led by Karen Campbell, was held at the American International Church, in central London. Organised by the URC and the Congregational Federation, and supported by the Council for World Mission, the service of celebration was attended by a diverse and international congregation. The service featured a creative and imaginative liturgy, and a mime entitled *Pioneer Paths*, led by the Rev. Suzanne Nockels, was enhanced by a piano score played by Alcyona Mick. A short video about this service is available on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UeirJXyI92Y>.

Reporting on the event, John Ellis, Immediate Past Moderator of the General Assembly, commented: "The sermon was preached by the Rev. Dr Susan Durber, the first woman to be Principal of Westminster College. She recalled some of her own experiences of being a women minister in male environments, including a funeral call when the man opening the door exclaimed "Cor blimey, the vicar's pregnant!". Dr Durber empathised with Constance Coltman's desire to be seen less as a campaigner for women's rights and more as a Christian following God's call. But she added that she had nonetheless come to see that being the first could be a vital support for someone else still immersed in a struggle for recognition and sometimes the pioneer had to be brave, bold and proud.

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## Family News

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### Rev. John & Valerie Ambrose Diamond Wedding Anniversary

As mentioned in the anniversaries section last month, John and Valerie reached their diamond wedding anniversary on 21<sup>st</sup> September. To celebrate they spent a few days in Eastbourne where they spent their honeymoon. Before the actual day, Valerie was presented with a card and flowers by the members of the Ladies Recreation Group, who meet on Monday evenings to play table tennis.



*We send our congratulations to John and Valerie on their special anniversary and pray that they will enjoy many more happy years together.*

### Jim & Irene Webb

Jim and Irene moved a few weeks ago from Witham to Rayleigh. I visited them recently in their flat which has been re-decorated and re-carpetted and all the boxes have been unpacked! Jim and Irene would be pleased to hear from anyone who remembers them. Their contact details are available from the Editor.

### Jean Hodges – 99 years young

Jean lives in Hockley and used to attend the URC church there but she is an avid reader of the Hadleigh Messenger, having grown up in The Avenue and then in Beech Road. Jean's sister is Gwen Bentley who still lives in Beech Road.



Jean married her husband Ben at our church in 1956 in the time of Rev. Peacock. I usually take the magazine to Jean to learn more about 'old Hadleigh' because she has a fantastic memory. My delivery of the September magazine took place a few days day after Jean celebrated her 99<sup>th</sup> birthday hence the photo.

Jean likes to ~~hear~~ archive cuttings and mgazines, like me, and seems to have an endless supply of poems, prayers and other items, some of which have been used in the magazine in recent months.

*We send our love and best wishes to Jean.*

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## From the Moderator's Blog 'Church House re-opening service'

It was a pleasure to preside at the service to celebrate the opening of Church House after extensive renovation works. There were a good crowd of people from all areas of our denomination to mark this occasion. We were blessed to hear my chaplain, Rev. Dr Gwen Collins, preach at the service.



**The service under way in Lumen**

The pictures show the service in Lumen followed by the ribbon cutting performed by the longest-serving member of staff, Wendy Cooper.



**Alan Yates and John Proctor with Wendy Cooper about to cut the ribbon**

We were grateful to Church House for making themselves available to show people the building. Rather like visiting a national Trust property our guides were located in each of the rooms and the visitors went around unescorted; the only difference is we didn't put thistles on the chairs!

There have been a lot of people involved in the renovation but I would like to mention two who ensured the building work was done well, on time and to budget – Jane Baird and John Proctor. Comparing our on-time/on-budget performance for this project would rate it as a highly successful project; so, thanks Jane and John.

The refurbishment has not been extravagant, but has brought the building into the 21<sup>st</sup> century making it bright, air-conditioned and accessible. For the first time, people with reduced physical capabilities are easily able to get into the building and move to all floors enabling them to share their gifts fully. The refurbishment has also allowed us to lease the top floor; and I'm pleased that our recent partner, Greenbelt Festivals, has joined us in the building – I hope that this is a sign that we will have a long and fruitful partnership.

Talking of Greenbelt, yesterday I was presented with a knitted chicken leg! One of the young people from my home church brought it back for me from Greenbelt. Not only did he have a great time, his mum said that it was great and that the URC involvement was a great success – so thanks to Steve Summers and all who make our partnership with Greenbelt work.

Finally, let me tell you about my first appearance on Premier Christian Radio. I was a guest on the 'Your News' slot. This is a one hour programme where the five most popular stories on their website in the previous week are discussed. The topics that I discussed ranged from praying for resurrection (not me!) to accusations that the Pope is guilty of heresy – quite a varied agenda. It was broadcast on 30<sup>th</sup> September. If you missed it you can hear it by streaming it from their website:

<https://www.premierchristianradio.com/Shows/Saturday/Your-News/Episodes/Your-News103>

Blessings,

*Alan Yates*

Posted on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2017

Editor's note: United Reformed Church House is located in central London at 86 Tavistock Place, Kings Cross, and is the administrative centre of the denomination. Around 60 employees work out of Church House, performing a wide variety of tasks including the essential financial, managerial and administration tasks of the Church, running the many Assembly programmes and supporting the 13 Synods in their work. John Proctor is the general secretary whose job is to maintain a strategic overview of the development, order, and wellbeing of the United Reformed Church.

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## HADLEIGH

**CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH** – In January of this year the smallest section (viz. the infants' class room) of the Congregational Church was formally dedicated and opened free of debt. The seating of this room being about 100, it was soon manifest that larger accommodation would have to be provided, as it has been impossible to seat all who have attended the services. During the past seven months the preachers have been students from New College whose services have been greatly enjoyed and real spiritual work is being done. The Rev. N. Richards has been appointed to superintend this work, and local help is accorded from all quarters. A Sunday School has been started, also a Pleasant Sunday Afternoon, and adult bible class for young men and women, which is providing to be quite an attractive feature of the village, and its numbers are well maintained. It is realised by the trustees that unless larger accommodation is provided the good work started will be crippled, and they have decided that No. 2 section of the building, which will consist of the lecture hall, providing seating for about 250 adults, three class rooms, kitchen etc., be now proceeded with. At a trustees' meeting, held on Friday last, it was decided that the building be commenced at once so that it may be completed and ready for the coming winter's work. The tender accepted for this No. 2 section is £511 7s. 6d., and the estimated cost of furniture is another £50. Towards this amount £100 has been generously given by Mr T. Dowsett J.P., who but a short time since purchased the site and gave it over to trust, and who further gave most liberally towards the erection of Section 1, which was thus enabled to opened free of debt. The local inhabitants have also contributed most generously towards this endeavour. The Rev. E. Hamilton and many friends from Cliff Town Congregational Church have also shown practical support, also others from various parts. That Hadleigh and the surrounding neighbourhood is a growing place all South East Essex knows, and by opening up a religious centre in such a place shows that Congregationalism is a denomination moving with the times and endeavouring to supply the wants of not a few who have lived in large towns and cities for years, and who, with local residents, desire a church real in its teaching and active in its operations.

This is one of the interesting articles about the history of the church that I have discovered in editions of the Southend Standard displayed recently on the British Newspaper Archive website. It is interesting to read that our Small Hall was originally designed as an infants' classroom and was expected to seat 100 adults. The article also made me realise that the two Opening Services held on 20<sup>th</sup> January 1904 were held in the Small Hall and not the church (or Lecture Hall as it is referred to in the article). For those who are not aware, a framed copy of the order of service booklet for the two Opening Services hangs at the back of the church near the main doors.

*Malcolm Brown*

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## Computer Corner

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### Lois Cunningham – ‘How Great Thou Art’

#### Interesting video

This is one of the videos that I played at the Harvest Supper. It features 98-year-old Lois Cunningham playing piano at the Grand Ole Opry, which is the mecca for country music. Lois received a standing ovation for her rendition of the well-known hymn and became an Internet sensation. The video has had over 10 million views.

URL: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GOci\\_YhOzdI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GOci_YhOzdI) (or search for Lois Cunningham)

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### Windows 10 – Control Panel desktop shortcut

If you are using Windows 10 then you may have noticed that the Control Panel no longer appears in the Start Menu although it does still exist. To create a desktop shortcut to Control Panel, do the following:

#### Useful tip

- Left-click on the Start button at the bottom left of the Windows desktop and type ‘Control Panel’. (A list of matching items will appear with ‘Control Panel Desktop app’ at the top.)
  - Right-click on ‘Control Panel Desktop app’ and left-click on the option to ‘Open File Location’. (A File Explorer window containing Control Panel and a few other system-related tools will appear.)
  - Right-click on the Control Panel item and hover over the ‘Send to’ option, which will cause another sub-menu to appear. In the sub-menu, left-click on the option for ‘Desktop (create shortcut)’. An icon for the Control Panel will then appear on the desktop.
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## Word Search – Politicians

It’s the season for party political conferences so find the politicians listed in the right-hand column.

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

ATTLEE  
BALDWIN  
CALLAGHAN  
CAMERON  
CHAMBERLAIN  
CHURCHILL  
CLEGG  
DISRAELI  
EDEN  
FARAGE  
GLADSTONE  
HAGUE  
HEATH  
LAWSON  
MAJOR  
PORTILLO  
TEBBIT  
THATCHER  
WALPOLE  
WILSON

Words may appear in any direction including diagonally, back to front and upside down.

# CHURCH DIARY FOR OCTOBER 2017

DAY	TIME	EVENT
Sunday 1 <sup>st</sup>	10.30am 6.30pm	Morning Service – Mr Keith Berry Evening Service with Holy Communion – Mr Jim Clubb
Monday 2 <sup>nd</sup>	8.00pm	Ladies Recreation Group
Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup>	9.30am - 11.00am	Alphabet Club for Parents/Carers & Tots
Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am - 12 noon	Coffee Morning
Saturday 7 <sup>th</sup>	8.30am - 10.00am	Men's Breakfast Meeting
Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Morning Service – Mr Robert Dart
Monday 9 <sup>th</sup>	8.00pm	Ladies Recreation Group
Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup>	9.30am - 11.00am 2.30pm	Alphabet Club for Parents/Carers & Tots Wives' Fellowship – Kevin ??? Illustrated Talk on 'The Limbless Association'
Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup>	7.30pm	ELDERS' MEETING
Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am - 12 noon	Coffee Morning
Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Morning Service with Holy Communion – Mr John Amos
Monday 16 <sup>th</sup>	8.00pm	Ladies Recreation Group
Tuesday 17 <sup>th</sup>	9.30am - 11.00am	Alphabet Club for Parents/Carers & Tots
Thursday 19 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am - 12 noon	Coffee Morning with bric-a-brac table for Christian Aid
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	10.30am	Morning Service – Mrs Janette Stevens
Monday 23 <sup>rd</sup>	8.00pm	Ladies Recreation Group
Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup>	No session - half term	Alphabet Club for Parents/Carers & Tots
Thursday 26 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Midweek Service – Rev. Jack Roche MA
Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Morning Service – Major Alan Bennett
Monday 30 <sup>th</sup>	8.00pm	Ladies Recreation Group
Tuesday 31 <sup>st</sup>	No session - cancelled	Alphabet Club for Parents/Carers & Tots

## October

October is the treasurer of the year,  
And all the months pay bounty to her store;  
The fields and orchards still their tribute bear,  
And fill her brimming coffers more and more.  
But she, with youthful lavishness,  
Spends all her wealth in gaudy dress,  
And decks herself in garments bold  
Of scarlet, purple, red, and gold.  
She heedeth not how swift the hours fly,  
But smiles and sings her happy life along;  
She only sees above a shining sky;  
She only hears the breezes' voice in song.

Her garments trail the woodlands through,  
And gather pearls of early dew  
That sparkle, till the roguish Sun  
Creeps up and steals them every one.  
But what cares she that jewels should be lost,  
When all of Nature's bounteous wealth is hers?  
Though princely fortunes may have been their cost,  
Not one regret her calm demeanour stirs.  
Whole-hearted, happy, careless, free,  
She lives her life out joyously,  
Nor cares when Frost stalks o'er her way  
And turns her auburn locks to gray.

*Paul Laurence Dunbar*