

# THE HADLEIGH MESSENGER

December 2017 & January 2018



“On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.”

Matthew 2:11

The Magazine of the  
United Reformed Church, Hadleigh, Essex

# THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH



The United Reformed Church (URC) began in 1972 by a union between the Congregational Church and the Presbyterian Church of England - hence United. The Union has since been extended to include the Re-formed Association of Churches of Christ, which joined in 1981, and the Congregation Union of Scotland, which joined in 2001.

The description 'Reformed' refers to the doctrine of the church, which derives from the Reformation of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. There is a full Statement of Belief in the Basis of Union determined by the Act of Parliament in 1972. Briefly, however, it may be stated thus:

- We believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- We believe that the Word of God in the Old and the New Testaments, discerned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is the supreme authority for the faith and conduct of all God's people.
- We believe that Jesus Christ, born into this world, living as a man among men, dying upon the cross, raised from the dead and reigning for evermore, is God's gift of himself to the world whereby his love and mercy are revealed, offering to all men forgiveness, reconciliation, and eternal life.
- We believe that the Church is God's people, gathered by his love to serve Him in reconciling the world to Himself.

The URC is governed by God acting through its members who are guided by the Holy Spirit in their councils – the Elders' Meeting, the Church Meeting, the provincial Synod and the General Assembly. Local churches belong to an Area Partnership (AP), which meets approximately twice a year. At Hadleigh, we belong to the South Essex Area Partnership, which is part of the Eastern Synod.

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## HADLEIGH URC OFFICERS

### Minister:

Vacancy

### Hon. Secretary:

Mr Royston Brackin (01702 558862)

### Acting Hon. Treasurer:

Mr Royston Brackin

### Elders: (\* denotes Serving Elder)

Mr Royston Brackin\*

Mrs Heather Brown\* (01702 557678)

Mr Malcolm Brown\* (01702 557678)

Miss Jean Reeve\* (01702 554907)

Mr Keith Gargrave, Mrs Mary Milne,  
Mrs Sylvia Patten

Elder 'emeritus': Rev. Peter Brewer

Each Serving Elder has a list of Church members and adherents for whom they have a pastoral responsibility. Please speak to your Elder if you have any problems, news etc.

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## USEFUL INFORMATION

Address: 1 Church Road, Hadleigh, Benfleet, SS7 2DQ

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

URC website: [www.urc.org.uk](http://www.urc.org.uk)

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### URC Eastern Synod Office contact info:

Address: Synod Office, The United Reformed Church,  
Whittlesford, Cambridge, CB2 4ND

Tel no: 01223 830770 E-mail: [eastern.admin@urc.org.uk](mailto:eastern.admin@urc.org.uk)

Website: [www.urc-eastern.org.uk](http://www.urc-eastern.org.uk)

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### An invitation...

If you are not currently connected with this church or any other place of worship then we assure you of a warm welcome at our services. *Why not join us next Sunday or at our monthly midweek service?*

If you are in need of help that the ministry of the church can supply then you can 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 any of the church officers know. All such requests are treated in the strictest confidence.

## PREACHING ARRANGEMENTS FOR DECEMBER 2017

Sun 3 <sup>rd</sup> Dec	10.30am	Gift Service	Rev. Dr Jim Tarrant
	6.30pm	Evening Service with Holy Communion	Mr Jim Clubb with Mrs Heather Brown
Sun 10 <sup>th</sup> Dec	10.30am	Morning Service	Mr Roger Brett
Sun 17 <sup>th</sup> Dec	10.30am	Morning Service with Holy Communion	Mrs Joyce Berry
	6.30pm	Christmas Celebration with Tea at 5.30pm	Rev. Dr Jim Tarrant
Thu 21 <sup>st</sup> Dec	10.30am	Christmas Midweek Service	Mr Malcolm Brown
Sun 24 <sup>th</sup> Dec	10.30am	Christmas Eve Service	Mr Wilf Tyler
Sun 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec	10.30am	Morning Service	Major Alan Bennett

## SUNDAY MORNING DUTY ROTAS FOR DECEMBER 2017

	ELDER	STEWARD	REFRESHMENTS
Sun 3 <sup>rd</sup> Dec	Jean Reeve	Marion Fidell	Marion Fidell
Sun 10 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Heather Brown	Ann Purkiss	Kay Watson
Sun 17 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Malcolm Brown [Holy Communion]	Marion Fidell	Jean Reeve
Sun 24 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Jean Reeve	Malcolm Brown	Marion Fidell
Sun 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec	Heather Brown	Janet Wimbleton	Janet Wimbleton

## FLOWER ROTA FOR DECEMBER 2017

Sun 3 <sup>rd</sup> Dec	John Rice - in memory of Barbara
Sun 10 <sup>th</sup> Dec	
Sun 17 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Jean Reeve - in memory of her father's birthday
Sun 24 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Malcolm Brown - in memory of his father
Sun 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec	

### ELDERS' MEETING

Wed 13<sup>th</sup> Dec 7.30pm

### CHURCH MEETING

No meeting in Dec

**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)

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

**Website:** [www.hadleighsexurc.org.uk](http://www.hadleighsexurc.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.

## PREACHING ARRANGEMENTS FOR JANUARY 2018

Sun 7 <sup>th</sup> Jan	10.30am	Morning Service	Mr John Amos
	6.30pm	Evening Service with Holy Communion	Mr Jim Clubb with Mrs Heather Brown
Sun 14 <sup>th</sup> Jan	10.30am	Morning Service	Mr Keith McCullough
Sun 21 <sup>st</sup> Jan	10.30am	Morning Service with Holy Communion	Rev. John Ambrose
Thu 25 <sup>th</sup> Jan	10.30am	Midweek Service	Mrs Heather Brown
Sun 28 <sup>th</sup> Jan	10.30am	Morning Service	Major Geoff Ashdown

## SUNDAY MORNING DUTY ROTAS FOR JANUARY 2018

	ELDER	STEWARD	REFRESHMENTS
Sun 7 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Malcolm Brown	Marion Fidell	Marion Fidell
Sun 14 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Jean Reeve	Ann Purkiss	Kay Watson
Sun 21 <sup>st</sup> Jan	Heather Brown [Holy Communion]	June Gargrave	Jean Reeve
Sun 28 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Malcolm Brown	Janet Wimbleton	Janet Wimbleton

## FLOWER ROTA FOR JANUARY 2018

Sun 7 <sup>th</sup> Jan	
Sun 14 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Jean Reeve - birthday
Sun 21 <sup>st</sup> Jan	
Sun 28 <sup>th</sup> Jan	

<b>ELDERS' MEETING</b>
Wed 10 <sup>th</sup> Jan 7.30pm

<b>CHURCH MEETING</b>
Thu 18 <sup>th</sup> Jan 12.30pm

### Meetings in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2018

- Thu 18<sup>th</sup> Jan 2018 - 10.30am - SA Temple
- Fri 19<sup>th</sup> Jan 2018 - 7.30pm - St Michael's Church
- Sun 21<sup>st</sup> Jan 2018 - 6.00pm - UNITED SERVICE at SA Temple
- Mon 22<sup>nd</sup> Jan 2018 - 7.30pm - Methodist Church
- Tue 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan 2018 - 2.30pm - Baptist Church
- Wed 24<sup>th</sup> Jan 2018 - 2.30pm - St Barnabas Church

You are invited to attend as many of the meetings as you are able.  
Refreshments will be served for fifteen minutes before the start  
of each weekday meeting and after the Sunday united service.

# A Christmas Message

Editor's note: The message below originally appeared in Witham URC's magazine and was written by Rev. Lorna Bantock. In the absence of a minister to write one for this magazine, I have taken the liberty of using Lorna's message as it a succinct reminder of the true meaning of Christ's birth.

Dear Friends,

Here we are again, at the beginning of advent, looking forward to Christmas. Millions of people are looking forward to celebrating, to having some time to relax with the family, or perhaps looking forward with trepidation to days of loneliness.

You cannot miss the message in the shops and in the streets: it is a time for spending money on gifts for loved ones. For too many people that is money they don't have on gifts that are not needed.

I'm not trying to be negative about Christmas, although I admit you might have got the impression that I had succeeded all too well in being negative, but sometimes hopes can become hype and then the real thing is a huge disappointment.

What are you looking forward to? What are you hoping for?

Personally? There is (I hope) something of the child in each of us, so we haven't lost the sense of excitement at opening presents, haven't lost the sense of anticipation for Christmas however stressful it is being ready on time, haven't lost the sense of amazement and wonder that God himself came down as a vulnerable baby just to give us a loving relationship with Him.

A fresh realisation of this truth, that God himself came down as a vulnerable baby just for you and me, is a gift beyond compare because no amount of anticipation or hype can ever leave us disappointed when we have experienced the love of our Father who created us, the grace, the forgiving love, of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Of course this isn't a gift you can buy or even earn or deserve in any way. It is just a gift proffered for which all we have to do is accept it and be thankful.

So in the coming weeks, among the hustle and bustle of preparation don't forget to prepare your heart and mind to receive again the most significant truth of all times: God loves you and me so much that He gave Jesus, his only son so that we can enjoy eternal life. Prepare your hearts for the truth.

But don't get tunnel vision! As you look forward in anticipation of celebrating that moment when Jesus came as a baby, don't miss Him, alive and active in our midst. Don't miss the opportunity to be part of what he is doing now.

As the famous hymn says:

*The Saviour, Saviour of the world is here!*

*Lorna Bantock*

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## From the Bible

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. – *John 1:1-14 (NIV)*

## From the Editor

Welcome to the combined December and January edition of the Hadleigh Messenger.

Its publication on the last Sunday of November may come as a bit of a surprise given the late arrival of some recent editions. However, the effort to achieve this in the time available means that I've not had time to write an article about my recent trip to East Yorkshire to see family and visit Hull (the UK City of Culture 2017) and various other places.

The image of the stained glass window that appears on the front cover is from St Mary the Virgin Church in Cottingham, one of the places visited. Cottingham claims to be the largest village in England but, as there is no strict definition of 'village', their claim is disputed by a number of other places.

I wish everyone reading the Hadleigh Messenger a peaceful Christmas and a healthy New Year.

*Malcolm Brown*

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## Christmas place names

From Cold Christmas (Hertfordshire) and Christmas Cross (Shropshire) to Holly Green (Worcestershire) and Ivy Tree (Cumbria), there are places scattered across the country where it feels like Christmas all year round – even if only in name.

On Christmas Eve, don't forget to hang up your Stocking (Herefordshire) and leave out a Carrot (Angus) for Rudolph. You can pucker up at Mistletoe Oak in Herefordshire, dream of a white Christmas in Snow Falls (North Yorkshire), or make your way to Bethlehem (Carmarthenshire) by the light of a Star (Somerset).

Britain even has Christmas dinner covered with Turkey Island (Hampshire), a side helping of Cranberry (Staffordshire) and Sproutes (West Sussex), followed by Pudding Hill (Windsor). Wash it all down with a couple of Brandys (Cornwall) or Baileys (Essex) and use your Nut Crackers (Devon) to break open your Brazils (Essex) or The Walnuts (Milton Keynes).

*From the Ordnance Survey blog*

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## Christmas crackers

Corny one-liners - hopefully better than the ones in your crackers!

- What happened to the man who stole an advent calendar? - He got 25 days.
- Why was the snowman looking through the carrots? - He was picking his nose.
- Why are pirates called pirates? - Because they arrrrrrrr!
- What's round and bad tempered? - A vicious circle.
- What do you call a donkey with 3 legs? - A wonkey.
- Where in a jungle is it not safe to park? - On a double yellow lion.
- What does a clock do when it's hungry? - It goes back four seconds!
- Which hand should you use to stir your coffee? - Neither, you should use a spoon.
- What do you call a chicken in a shell suit? - An egg.
- How do dogs know who's calling them on their mobile phone? - Collar ID.
- What do you call a caveman who wanders around aimlessly? - A meanderthal.
- Why shouldn't you have a barbeque on the roof? - Because the steaks are too high.

## Wives' Fellowship Programme for Dec 2017 & Jan 2018

Date	Time	Meeting
Tue 5 <sup>th</sup> Dec	2.30pm	Slideshow of 'Bygone Views from Padgett Postcards' by Malcolm Brown
Tue 19 <sup>th</sup> Dec	2.30pm	Christmas Carols & Communion led by Rev. Jack Roche
Tue 16 <sup>th</sup> Jan	2.30pm	Talk: 'History of Dates from 1800' by Jean Nightingale

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

### Wives Fellowship Meeting – 11<sup>th</sup> November

The Wives' Fellowship meeting on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> November was a demonstration of flower arranging and display of crafts presented by Carol Williams and Pat Tyler. Both ladies are well-qualified in the flower stakes as Carol runs a floral art club that meets at the Salvation Army Temple and Pat was a professional florist with her own shop for a number of years. Pat explained that, unlike floral art, flower arranging does not involve any props, She proceeded to make a simple but exquisite arrangement of yellow roses.



A rapt audience in the Small Hall



Carol showing off her knitted hedgehogs



Pat demonstrating techniques

Carol did a miniature flower arrangement in a glass dish and then showed off some delightful, knitted hedgehogs. These are knitted with a 'spiky' wool that is very effective. Carol has been making and selling the hedgehogs to raise money towards Thundersley Congregational Church's purchase of the land next to their church, on which they hope to build a new community-oriented church building. The hedgehogs were very popular and Carol sold several and took orders for more.

*Malcolm Brown*

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### “What a lovely thing a rose is!”

He walked past the couch to the open window and held up the drooping stalk of a moss-rose, looking down at the dainty blend of crimson and green. It was a new phase of his character to me, for I had never before seen him show any keen interest in natural objects.

“There is nothing in which deduction is so necessary as religion,” said he, leaning with his back against the shutters. “It can be built up as an exact science by the reasoner. Our highest assurance of the goodness of Providence seems to me to rest in the flowers. All other things, our powers, our desires, our food, are all really necessary for our existence in the first instance. But this rose is an extra. Its smell and its colour are an embellishment of life, not a condition of it. It is only goodness which gives extras, and so I say again that we have much to hope from the flowers.” – Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Naval Treaty*

# WHAT'S ON

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

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- Sat 2 Dec 2017 - Christmas Market & Family Extravaganza at Seevic College, Runnymede Chase, off Kiln Road, Thundersley. Organised by Hadleigh Castle Rotary Club with local Christmas crafts, Santa's grotto, games, raffle and more. From 11.00am to 3.30pm. Admission - Adults 1.00, Children free.
- 
- ditto - Hadleigh Christmas Lights Switch-On by St James the Less Church with carols from 4.15pm and switching-on of the new Christmas lights at 4.30pm. Refreshments served afterwards in the church vestry.
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- ditto - Christmas Concert with Leigh Orpheus Male Voice Choir and The Swift Singers at the SA Hadleigh Temple. Starts at 7.00pm. Tickets £8.00 available on 01702 547317 or pay at the door if seats available.
- 
- ditto - BASOP Christmas Concert at Hadleigh Methodist Church starting at 8.00pm. Tickets £7.00 available via Michael Tanner on 01702 551786.
- 
- Thu 7 Dec 2017 - Westwood Singers (WI Choir) Concert in aid of Action for Children at Hadleigh Methodist Church. Starts at 10.00am.
- 
- Sat 9 Dec 2017 - Coffee Morning at Hadleigh Methodist Church from 10.00 to 12 noon.
- 
- Sun 10 Dec 2017 - Civic Carol Service at the SA Hadleigh Temple starting at 6.00pm.
- 
- Wed 13 Dec 2017 - Coffee Morning at St Michael's Church Community Room, St Michael's Road, Daws Heath, from 10.00am to 11.45am. Coffee mornings held every Wednesday at the same time.
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- Sat 16 Dec 2017 - Sleeping Beauty at Runnymede Hall, Kiln Road, Thundersley. Panto-style fun and sing-a-long songs for everyone. Starts at 1.00pm. Tickets: Adults £6.00, Children (3-16) £5.00, Under 3s free (no seat), Family tickets (2 adults + 2 children) £17.00. To book, phone 01268 882474.
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- ditto - Good Old Mr Scrooge - a Christmas adventure for all the family by Searchlight Theatre Company - at Thundersley Congregational Church, Kenneth Road, Thundersley, SS7 3AL. Starts at 7.15pm. Tickets: Adults £7.00, Children £5.00 - order via [www.ticketsource.co.uk/thenoise](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/thenoise)
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- ditto - Friends Of Hadleigh Church Concert with Chorus Sirenium & Southend Young Men's Chorus at St James the Less Church. Starts at 7.30pm. Tickets on the door £10.00, includes mulled wine and mince pies.
- 
- Mon 18 Dec 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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- Wed 20 Dec 2017 - Christmas Fete organised by Thundersley Town Team in Thundersley town centre, Hart Road shopping area. Starts at 3.00pm.
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- Thu 21 Dec 2017 - Poetry Reading Group at Hadleigh Library from 2.30pm to 3.30pm. Meetings held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month. All welcome.
- 
- Sat 13 Jan 2018 - Coffee Morning at Hadleigh Methodist Church from 10.00 to 12 noon.
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- ditto - Hadleigh & Thundersley Community Archive Drop-in at Hadleigh Library from 10.30am to 12 noon.
- 
- Sat 20 Jan 2018 - Quiz Night at St Michael's Church. Tickets £6.00 - available from Ken Jones on 01702 555573.
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More events listed on the HELIX website at <http://www.hadleighsex.info>.



# Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2018

A Prayer Octave for Christian Unity was first celebrated from 18<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> January 1908. In 1968, churches and parishes around the world received for the first time material for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

The 2018 material was prepared for worldwide use by the Christians of the Caribbean and uses Exodus 15, a song of triumph over oppression, as the motif of the Week of Prayer. Resources are downloadable from the CTBI website at <http://www.ctbi.org.uk>.

## That All May Be Free



### Background

There are 1.4 Million Christians living in the Caribbean region, across a vast geographical spread of island and mainland territories. They represent a rich and diverse tapestry of ethnic, linguistic and religious traditions, with a complex variety of governmental and constitutional arrangements.

The contemporary context is deeply marked by the history of the colonialism which stripped people of their identity, dignity and freedom. Christian missionary activity, closely tied to the colonial system, seemed to support, encourage and excuse it. During five-hundred years of the colonial system, scripture was used to justify the enslavement of the indigenous people.

In a dynamic reversal, those same scriptures became the inspiration and motivation for people to reclaim their liberty. Recognising the hand of God in the ending of enslavement, the Caribbean Christians offer Exodus 15, a song of triumph over oppression, as the motif of the Week of Prayer. The hymn, The Right Hand of God, reflecting the song of Miriam and Moses in praise of the liberating action of God, has become the anthem of the ecumenical movement in the region.

Like the Israelites, the people of the Caribbean have a song of victory and freedom to sing. Yet, contemporary challenges continue to enslave and threaten the dignity of the people. Many of the contemporary challenges are the legacy of the colonial past. The Caribbean economies have traditionally been based upon the production of

materials for the European market – sometimes producing only a single commodity. They have never been self-sustaining and their development has required borrowing on the international market. The servicing of the debt has caused a reduction in spending upon the development that it was meant to facilitate.

The chosen passage from Exodus 15 allows us to see that the road to unity must often pass through a communal experience of suffering. The Israelites' liberation from enslavement is the foundational event in the constitution of the people. Although our liberation and salvation is at God's initiative, human agencies are engaged in their realisation. Christians participate in God's ministry of reconciliation, yet our divisions hamper our witness to a world in need of God's healing.

### Themes

The themes of the daily material raise some of the contemporary issues addressed by the churches of the Caribbean. Abuses of human rights are found across the region and we are challenged to consider our manner of welcoming of the stranger into our midst. Human trafficking and modern-day slavery continue to be huge issues. Addiction to pornography and drugs, continue to be serious challenges to all societies. The debt crisis has a negative impact upon the nations and upon individuals – the economies of the nations and people have become precarious. Family life continues to be challenged by the economic restrictions which lead to migration, domestic abuse and violence.

The Caribbean Churches work together to heal the wounds in the body of Christ. Reconciliation demands repentance, reparation and the healing of memories. The whole Church is called to be both a sign and an active agent of this reconciliation.

### Local observance

In 2018, the Week of Prayer meetings in Hadleigh will fall within the official Octave dates but there is not a meeting on every day of the Octave.

A united service will be held at the SA Temple on the Sunday in the middle of the Octave.

For full details of the meetings, please see the page for the January preaching arrangements and duty rotas.

# The Charity 'Christian Concern'

One of the charities which the Church is supporting with our end of year donations this year is Christian Concern. For most of the charities we support, their objectives are quite clear. For Christian Concern, this is not the case, so some light cast upon their activities will probably be helpful.

The charity's published aim is: "Christian Concern exists to speak of Jesus Christ in public life. We do this in the courts, in Government and in the media". As to how they pursue this aim, one aspect is helping well-intentioned Christians who in faithfully following our Lord's teachings have found themselves in difficulties. They are facing expulsion from colleges, employer's disciplinary action, loss of employment, legal challenges in the courts etc..

Christian Concern seeks to protect such people by providing legal advice and assistance extending to actual representation in the courts by Christian barristers, for which the charity provide the funds.

Let me illustrate this with a few examples from their case notes. All comments at the side of these examples are as published by Christian Concern. The cases are ongoing in that they are now the subject of legal actions.

The examples that follow are not complete accounts but snippets so that readers of the magazine may gain an appreciation of the type of situation arising throughout our country at the present time. For those with computer facilities, the Christian Concern website gives full details of these actual cases, which can be followed through, from inception to the current stage:

## Richard Page, magistrate

Richard Page was removed from the Bench after dissenting from his colleagues' decision to order an adoption of a child by a same-sex couple.



Richard Page

The Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chief Justice have admitted that the

Employment Tribunal has jurisdiction to hear his claim against dismissal from the Magistracy. The trial, after being postponed twice on the Lord Chancellor's application, will now take place in February 2018.

## Joshua Sutcliffe, teacher

Joshua Sutcliffe is facing disciplinary action after accidentally referring to a transgender boy student as a girl.



Joshua, along with Andrea Williams, was aggressively interviewed by

Phillip Schofield on ITV's *This Morning*, with the presenter implying that Christian views on sex and gender are 'abhorrent' and 'medieval'.

Despite this, the Twitter reaction, as well as a poll on the show's website, suggested there was widespread support for Joshua. His story has featured in the press and the media all over the world, and been a wonderful opportunity to share the good news about God and his plan for humanity, created male and female, in his image. Matthew Hosier wrote a helpful response to the interview, 'Dear Phillip', on Think Theology.

Joshua's story shows just some of the dangers posed by the full-blown acceptance of 'transgender' ideology in schools. Not only does it harm the children involved, but it threatens Christian freedoms.

All of this demonstrates the vital need for the Church to speak boldly on cultural issues, and to resist all attacks on the reality that humans are made in God's image, male and female.

## Felix Ngole, student

Sadly, the High Court ruled against Felix Ngole, who was expelled from his university course because he expressed his biblical beliefs about marriage during a Facebook discussion. Felix had asked the court to judicially review the University of Sheffield's decision to remove him from his course, effectively making it impossible for Felix to become a social worker. Felix plans to appeal.



Felix Ngole

Through perseverance in their support of the various cases which are brought to their notice Christian Aid has achieved many successful outcomes. The courts are shown the unjust ways in which some of our fellow Christians are being treated whilst following Christ's teachings.

The charity does not give up if unsuccessful at the first hurdle and will sometimes go as far as the international European Court of Human Rights in support of Christians.

Christian Concern also speaks out for the Christian faith over national issues on radio and television. One of these issues is the abortion legislation which is coming into the news again as there is talk of further changes to the law.

I believe we need Christian organisations such as this to keep Christians aware of the type of situations which are arising all over our country at the present time that are contrary to our faith. As Christians we also need to have a watch kept over national matters, so that we remain abreast of events affecting our Christian faith as they develop.

*Royston Brackin*

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## Christmas Services

### Christmas Gift Service – Sun 3<sup>rd</sup> December

Some years ago the Church decided to donate items from our Gift Service that were suitable for them, to the Dove Project, which provides temporary accommodation for women and children escaping from domestic violence. The remaining items received were to be sent, as normal, to HARP (Homeless Action Resource Project) in Southend, who received our monthly collection during the rest of the year. Comparatively recently, due to ill health, the Christian friend who took the monthly collections to HARP became unable to do so, and it was agreed for them to be donated to Hopeworx instead.

This year, the Dove Project have told us, with regret, that they are unable to take our Christmas gifts. They have less accommodation now and two other churches have already offered to give Christmas gifts to them. In view of this, it has been decided that Christmas gifts comprising items of children's clothing, toys, colouring books, etc., will be sent to Little Havens Hospice, who have told us they will be delighted to receive them. Any gifts that are more appropriate to the homeless, such as men's clothing, tinned or dried food, etc., will, for this Christmas collection only, be taken to HARP. All gifts will be gratefully received.

*Royston Brackin*

### Christmas Celebration – Sun 17<sup>th</sup> December

We are again holding our Christmas Celebration which consists of a Celebration Tea in the Small Hall at 5.30pm followed by a service at 6.30pm. Please invite family and friends to share in this special Christmas occasion. If you intend to come to the tea, please let Jean Reeve or Heather Brown know, as they are dealing with the catering arrangements.

The Christmas Celebration service will be led by Rev. Dr Jim Tarrant, who writes as follows:

“At this service we shall be anticipating the events of Christmas. We shall be reminded of the prophecies concerning our Lord. Matthew tells of the birth of Jesus and Luke relates how the shepherds went to the manger. Some of our carols support these narratives including such favourites as ‘Hark the herald angels sing’, ‘While shepherds watched’ and ‘As with gladness men of old’. The address will remind us of our need for Christ and we shall join together in singing the Christians’ favourite, ‘O come all ye faithful’. This is a time of year that always offers us something new, no matter how often we may celebrate it. Perhaps that is because the invitation comes from Christ himself and not simply from Ministers or the church. So let us go even unto Bethlehem to join the child in the manger, but always mindful that he is also the king of glory who stands with us and before us throughout the year.

May you have a happy and blessed Christmas.”

*Rev. Dr. Jim Tarrant*

### Christmas Eve Service – Sun 24<sup>th</sup> December

The Christmas Eve Service will be our final service before Christmas Day as there is no service at the church on that day. We are grateful to Wilf Tyler for leading this service.

## From the Echo Archive – A Baby for the Nativity Play

Editor's note: Some of my favourite discoveries in the material rescued earlier this year from the Echo archive in Basildon, were three cuttings and a photo relating to the nativity play at our church in 1981. At that time our minister was Rev. George Peters. George's wife, Lillian, was keen to use a real baby to play Jesus in the nativity play and launched an appeal through the Echo to try and find one.

### **On 25<sup>th</sup> November 1981, the Echo carried the following appeal under the title 'Lillian hunts for a little prophet':**

A new star is being offered a chance to shine in a Christmas show by a woman who is defying doctors' orders and a crippling disease to direct it. She is appealing for an actor or actress for a central role – a baby between four and six weeks old to play Jesus.

Director and playwright, Mrs Lillian Peters, wife of Hadleigh United Reformed Church minister George said the deadline was 12 December. The baby will be the star in a cast of more than 18 children and adults for one performance at the church on Saturday, December 12.

Mrs Peters, 66, said: "It doesn't matter even if the baby cries. At least then the audience will know it's a real baby."

The nativity was in jeopardy when doctors told wheelchair-bound Mrs Peters to pull out. She suffers from osteo-arthritis and doctors said the strain of producing, directing and writing the show would be too much.

She said: "The kids were so disappointed that I changed my mind. I direct from the wheelchair. It makes life a bit difficult, but for years I have been doing a play."

Mrs Peters checked her own family for a suitable baby. She has four children and nine grandchildren but none fitted the bill. Last year's baby, from Church Road, Hadleigh, was ideal. His father had also been Jesus in a nativity play as a baby.

Mrs Peters promised the baby would be in good hands. She trained as a nurse and worked in a maternity hospital.

### **On 1<sup>st</sup> December 1981, the Echo printed the following report under the title 'Echo puts show on the road':**

A nativity play directed by a woman confined to a wheelchair is to go ahead – thanks to the Echo. An urgent appeal was published last week for a baby to play the central role of the few weeks old Jesus. Now a Southend couple have come forward to offer their two-week old baby boy for the part.

Director and playwright Mrs Lillian Peters, who is confined to a wheelchair with osteo-arthritis, said: "I am thrilled to bits. I didn't know if I would be able to find a baby, But the mother saw the story in the Echo and got in touch. It makes such a difference to the play; it makes the atmosphere and the children in the cast are thrilled."

The baby will be the star of a cast of 18 for one performance at Hadleigh United Reformed Church on Saturday, December 12. Mrs Peter's husband George is minister there. On stage with the baby will be his mother 20-year-old Mrs Barbara Pearson.

Mrs Peters said: "The mother will be in costume and if the baby cries or anything, she can come to the rescue."

The play was nearly called off once before when doctors told Mrs Peters to pull out. They told her the strain of producing, directing and writing the show would be too much. But she decided to soldier on when the children in the cast told her how disappointed they were.

Mrs Pearson said: "I read the story in the Echo and I felt sorry for the little girls and boys in the Echo picture. I thought I would let my little baby boy do it."

Barbara's husband, 23-year-old Bruce, is an air steward and may not be in the country for the show.

### **A final article about the nativity play appeared in the Echo on 16 December 1981 under the title 'A cuddly Christmas star is born':**

Louise Wimbledon, 10, had her hands full when she played Mary in a nativity play at Hadleigh United Reformed Church. For the starring role of baby Jesus was played by tiny Daniel Pearson, just one month old. And Louise, of Broughton Road, Hadleigh, was left holding the babe.

Daniel's mum, Barbara, of Friars Street, Shoebury, put her son forward for the part after an appeal in the Echo by organiser Mrs Lillian Peters.

Mrs Peters said: "Daniel was marvellous. His mother said she had never seen him stay awake so long. He was smiling at the children all the time."



**Louise Wimbleton with baby Jesus (Daniel Pearson)**

For readers who may not be aware, Louise is the daughter of Janet Wimbleton, a member of our current Sunday morning congregation.

*Malcolm Brown*

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## **Pre-New Year's Eve Social – Sat 30<sup>th</sup> Dec @ 6.30pm**

As New Year Eve falls on a Sunday this year, our customary social will be held a day earlier on the Saturday. The social will commence at 6.30pm and finish around 9.00pm. We hope that as many as possible of our congregation and friends will join us. If anyone would like to come to the social but is concerned about transport to the church and home again, please phone Malcolm on 01702 557678.

As usual, we will be having a 'bring and share' supper. A list will be placed on the foyer noticeboard for people to enter their names and the food item(s) being brought. Help would be much appreciated on the night in preparing food items for the supper table as they arrive and also in serving refreshments. Please let Ann Purkiss know if you will be able to help in this way. Should you have any games, or ideas for games, that would be suitable for the occasion, do please let me know.

The aim of the evening is to provide a time of fellowship which all can enjoy. The programme will include a selection of games of different types, but if you would prefer not to take part in some or all of them, don't be concerned; you will be very welcome just to enjoy watching others and chatting if you would prefer. We will conclude with a few favourite carols followed by a short epilogue.

Looking forward to seeing you there!

*Royston Brackin*

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## **Thoughts on the New Year**

- “Be at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbours, and let every new year find you a better man.” – *Benjamin Franklin*
- "There are far, far better things ahead than any we leave behind." - C.S. Lewis
- “Glory to God in highest heaven, Who unto man His Son hath given;  
While angels sing with tender mirth, A glad new year to all the earth.” – *Martin Luther*

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## Family News

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### Daisy Tharby-Brown

Heather and I went up to Norwich on 16<sup>th</sup> November to see our granddaughter Daisy, on her 1<sup>st</sup> birthday. Daisy is quite petite but healthy and very alert. She has seven teeth and can say a number of words including her own name but her favourite word seems to be 'bird'. She can walk if you hold her hand but can only manage two or three steps on her own at present.



Our birthday present to Daisy was a woollen coat and hat, which she wore later in the day when we went to the play park on the housing estate – known as Queens Hill – where the family live.

### Brown family news

Jennifer has finally handed in the thesis for her PhD with the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) and will shortly have her viva voce (oral examination). She has obtained temporary work with the BAS on a project concerned with Emperor penguins but is also applying for more permanent jobs.

Andrew continues on his teacher training at Gable Hall School, Stanford-le-Hope. He travels to and from the stations at Leigh-on-Sea and Stanford-le-Hope on a folding bike, which is proving very useful. Unusually, Gable Hall School has a two-week autumn half-term so Andrew was able to accompany us on our trip to East Yorkshire.

Heather is no longer playing piano for the Hadleigh Male Voice Choir (formerly Highlands Men's Forum Choir) as it has recently disbanded owing to the health and age of some of its members.

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## A personal prayer

Lord Jesus, my coming King,  
comfort me again this Advent.  
Reassure me where I need consolation,  
strengthen me where I am weak  
and challenge me where I need to change.

Lord Jesus, my coming King,  
make me a comforter for you again this Advent.  
Quicken my heart in prayer for others,  
motivate my hands, feet and resources to serve  
and prepare my heart and life for you, my coming,  
comforting Lord. *Amen*

## From the Moderator's Blog

### 'Broad Chalke URC: a community church'

Last week I visited, what is technically, one of our smaller congregations, with fewer than 10 members. What I found, when I arrived, was far removed from what one might expect of a very small church. The congregation has been on a journey which started more than a decade ago when the pews were removed, under floor heating added and carpet installed. This bright and welcoming space was further transformed a few years ago to become a vibrant hub for the small community of Broad Chalke (population about 700).



**Broad Chalke URC**

This was both a brave and sacrificial act for the congregation which has resulted in a well-used community facility which does not disguise the fact that it is also a place of worship. The church is situated right at the centre of this somewhat sprawling village and so was well-placed to become a community hub. The first third of the sanctuary, nearest the main entrance, has been turned into the village shop and Post Office. The remainder of the sanctuary, shown in the photograph, is a multi-purpose communal space with a small kitchen and coffee bar/servery.



**Cafe and worship space from the gallery**

The store is open six days a week, as is the 'café' for coffee and lunches. Even on a cold Monday afternoon there were a quite a few people in the church. I'm told that the vast majority of

households in Broad Chalke are touched, one way or another, by the URC!



Some of the key people I met. From L to R: Nick Lowe, Will Hillary (Chair of The Hub), Rev. Jackie Lowe, Barbara White (Salisbury URC), Joan Smith (Sec. Salisbury URC), Rev. Tod Gobledale, and Rina Musselwhite (Sec. Broad Chalke URC)

So how does such a small congregation achieve so much? I observed three reasons for this. Firstly, they are listening to the Spirit and being obedient, even when it requires sacrifice. Secondly, they are working with the community: with those of any faith and those of none although it must be said the Anglican church is a particularly strong partner in this enterprise. Finally, they are well supported by their sister URC in Salisbury.

In total, there are something like 80 volunteers that support their operations. The shop and the café are managed by 'The Hub', which is run by a village committee. The facilities are leased to The Hub by the URC. Sometimes I feel we struggle to make our church relevant for folk outside, but Broad Chalke has definitely become very relevant to their community.

While I celebrate the way the congregation has made their church the true centre of village life I do not want to suggest it was easy, either practically or emotionally. In turning the front part of the church into a shop and Post Office (which don't open on Sundays) this has resulted in worshippers having to go around to the back of the building to get into the worship space. This is not ideal. Nonetheless, I think the church is to be commended for their sacrifice to enable The Hub to thrive, and the village community to be served better by the church. I know they are looking for a better solution for access ... and I pray one will be found.

Blessings,

*Alan*

Posted on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2017

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## Computer Corner

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### Hadleigh & Thundersley Community Archive

**Interesting  
website**

As one of the editors for the Community Archive site, I have an obvious interest in recommending that readers visit the site. However, there is a reason for doing so at the current time because the site is being converted to run on open-source WordPress software, as used by many blogging sites. The archive site has been frozen for a few weeks whilst the articles and photos are transferred to Wordpress but it should be live again by the beginning of December. It will look quite different so do pay a visit.

URL: <http://www.hadleighhistory.org.uk>

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### The Wondrous World of Perovskites

**Interesting  
video**

The crystalline materials known as Perovskites make up 38% of the volume of the earth. Moreover, they have many very important practical uses, for example in electronics, ultrasonics and in thermal sensing devices. So what are they exactly? Mike Glazer explains how tiny changes in their crystal structures can lead to such a vast array of different properties and why they are so important in our daily lives.

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v9bMEUr2II4> or search for 'perovskites'

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### 12-sided calendar

**Useful  
download**

If you fancy a little project over the holiday period, why not download a pdf file printed with a 12-sided calendar in the form of a dodecahedron (regular or rhombic). There are instructions on how to download and assemble the calendar on the web page.

URL: <http://folk.uib.no/nmioa/kalender>

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## Word Search – Christmas

An obvious choice – the words in this month's word search are all connected with Christmas.

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

ADVENT  
BETHLEHEM  
CANDLE  
CAROL  
CHRISTINGLE  
FRANKINCENSE  
GOODWILL  
HEROD  
HOLLY  
JESUS  
MANGER  
MYRRH  
NATIVITY  
NOEL  
SANTA  
SAVIOUR  
STOCKING  
TINSEL  
TURKEY  
YULETIDE

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



## CHURCH DIARY FOR JANUARY 2018

DAY	TIME	EVENT
Tuesday 2 <sup>nd</sup>	No session - holiday	Alphabet Club for Parents/Carers & Tots
Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am - 12 noon	Coffee Morning
Sunday 7 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am 6.30pm	Morning Service – Mr John Amos Evening Service with Holy Communion – Mr Jim Clubb
Monday 8 <sup>th</sup>	8.00pm	Ladies Recreation Group
Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup>	9,30am - 11.00am	Alphabet Club for Parents/Carers & Tots
Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup>	7.30pm	ELDERS' MEETING
Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am - 12 noon	Coffee Morning
Sunday 14 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Morning Service – Mr Keith McCullough
Monday 15 <sup>th</sup>	8.00pm	Ladies Recreation Group
Tuesday 16 <sup>th</sup>	9.30am - 11.00am 2.30pm	Alphabet Club for Parents/Carers & Tots Wives' Fellowship – Talk on 'History of Dates from 1800' by Jean Nightingale
Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am - 12 noon 12.30pm	Coffee Morning - with bric-a-brac table for Christian Aid CHURCH MEETING
Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup>	10.30am	Morning Service with Holy Communion – Rev. John Ambrose
Monday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	8.00pm	Ladies Recreation Group
Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup>	9.30am - 11.00am	Alphabet Club for Parents/Carers & Tots
Thursday 25 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Midweek Service – Mrs Heather Brown
Sunday 28 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Morning Service – Major Geoff Ashdown
Monday 29 <sup>th</sup>	8.00pm	Ladies Recreation Group
Tuesday 30 <sup>th</sup>	9.30am - 11.00am	Alphabet Club for Parents/Carers & Tots
Thursday 31 <sup>st</sup>	10.30am	Coffee Morning

### A New Year Blessing

May God make your year a happy one.

Not by shielding you from all sorrows and pain, but by strengthening you to bear it, as it comes;

not by making your path easy, but by making you sturdy to travel any path;

not by taking hardships from you, but by taking fear from your heart;

not by granting you unbroken sunshine, but by keeping your face bright, even in the shadows;

not by making your life always pleasant, but by showing you when people and their causes need you most, and by making you anxious to be there to help.

God's love, peace, hope and joy to you for the year ahead.

*Amen*

## CHURCH DIARY FOR DECEMBER 2017

DAY	TIME	EVENT
Saturday 2 <sup>nd</sup>	8.30am - 10.00am	Men's Breakfast Meeting
Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup>	10.30am 6.30pm	Morning Service – Rev. Dr Jim Tarrant Evening Service with Holy Communion – Mr Jim Clubb
Monday 4 <sup>th</sup>	8.00pm	Ladies Recreation Group
Tuesday 5 <sup>th</sup>	9.30am - 11.00am 2.30pm	Alphabet Club for Parents/Carers & Tots Wives' Fellowship – Slideshow of 'Bygone Views from Padgett Postcards' by Malcolm Brown
Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am - 12 noon	Coffee Morning
Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Morning Service – Mr Roger Brett
Monday 11 <sup>th</sup>	8.00pm	Ladies Recreation Group
Tuesday 12 <sup>th</sup>	9.30am - 11.00am	Alphabet Club for Parents/Carers & Tots
Wednesday 13 <sup>th</sup>	7.30pm	ELDERS' MEETING
Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am - 12 noon	Coffee Morning with bric-a-brac table for Christian Aid
Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am 5.30pm 6.30pm	Morning Service with Holy Communion – Mrs Joyce Berry Christmas Celebration Tea Christmas Celebration Service – Rev. Dr Jim Tarrant
Monday 18 <sup>th</sup>	8.00pm	Ladies Recreation Group
Tuesday 19 <sup>th</sup>	No session - holiday 2.30pm	Alphabet Club for Parents/Carers & Tots Wives' Fellowship – Christmas Communion led by Rev. Jack Roche
Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup>	10.30am	Midweek Service – Mr Malcolm Brown
Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Christmas Eve Service – Mr Wilf Tyler
Monday 25 <sup>th</sup>	No session - holiday	Ladies Recreation Group
Tuesday 26 <sup>th</sup>	No session - holiday	Alphabet Club for Parents/Carers & Tots
Thursday 28 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am - 12 noon	Coffee Morning
Sunday 31 <sup>st</sup>	10.30am	Morning Service – Major Alan Bennett

### A song was heard at Christmas

A song was heard at Christmas  
To wake the midnight sky:  
A saviour's birth, and peace on earth,  
And praise to God on high.

The angels sang at Christmas  
With all the hosts above,  
And still we sing the newborn King  
His glory and his love.

*Timothy Dudley-Smith*