

THE HADLEIGH MESSENGER

June 2019



The Magazine of the
United Reformed Church, Hadleigh, Essex

SUNDAY SERVICES

10.30am every Sunday
with Holy Communion on 3rd Sunday of the month

6.30pm on 1st Sunday only
with Holy Communion

PREACHING ARRANGEMENTS FOR JUNE 2019

Sun 2 nd Jun	10.30am	Morning Service	Rev. Celia Whitman
	6.30pm	Evening Service with Holy Communion	Mr Jim Clubb with Mrs Heather Brown
Sun 9 th Jun	10.30am	Morning Service	Major Alan Bennett
Sun 16 th Jun	10.30am	Church Anniversary Morning Service with HC	Mr Adrian Tinning
	6.30pm	Church Anniversary Evening Service	Rev. Dr Jim Tarrant MA MTh
Sun 23 rd Jun	10.30am	Morning Service	Rev. John Ambrose PGCE (Ox)
Sun 30 th Jun	10.30am	Morning Service	Rev. Jack Roche MA

SUNDAY MORNING DUTY ROTAS FOR JUNE 2019

	ELDER	STEWARD	REFRESHMENTS
Sun 2 nd Jun	Heather Brown	Doreen Churchill	Jean Reeve
Sun 9 th Jun	Malcolm Brown	Ann Purkiss	Kay Watson
Sun 16 th Jun	Heather Brown [Holy Communion]	Malcolm Brown	Marion Fidell
Sun 23 rd Jun	Jean Reeve	June Gargrave	Doreen Churchill
Sun 30 th Jun	Malcolm Brown	Janet Wimbledon	Janet Wimbledon

FLOWER ROTA

Sun 2 nd Jun	
Sun 9 th Jun	Jeanne Spackman - in memory of Geoff & Marjorie Chase
Sun 16 th Jun	
Sun 23 rd Jun	
Sun 30 th Jun	Vera Knapton - in memory of Phil

ELDERS' MEETING

Wed 12th June 7.30pm

CHURCH MEETING

No meeting in June

HADLEIGH URC OFFICERS

Interim Moderators:

Rev. Jim Tarrant/Rev. Celia Whitman

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: 1 Church Road, Hadleigh, Benfleet, SS7 2DQ
Website: 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 one of our church officers know. All such requests are treated in the strictest confidence.

Pastoral letter

Though these days people take holidays all-year-round, most holidays are taken in the summer. Many conversations are held about holidays – where to go, which ones we've enjoyed and which ones we've not enjoyed! Whether we like active holidays or quiet ones, or a mixture of both, they do give us an opportunity to have a break from our usual routine.

Used positively, we can enjoy ourselves and return refreshed and ready to take up our usual routine, and as one little girl said to me once, holidays are for fun, holidays are for everyone. To have a break can help us and sustain us during our day-to-day routine and to have a break occasionally can also help us to unwind and to appreciate the world we live in. A modern equivalent of this, so I am told, is given the word, mindfulness. This simply means, stopping for 15 minutes or so each day to appreciate the world and people around us. We can do this in different ways: by looking at the creative world and tracing the still water of the sea or pond; by tracing the lines of branches in a tree or clouds floating in the sky; by eating our food slowly and thinking about what we are eating – enjoying the taste and sensation of eating.

There is a spirituality in marvelling at creation be it a garden, flowers, trees, the sunset or sunrise. There are many examples in the Bible that speak to us of the peace and tranquillity that pausing for

a while can bring. We read in the Old Testament that the prophet Elijah was so used to noise rushing around and prophesying for God that when he was being persecuted and in need, he tried to find God in the place he usually found him because he needed his help, but Elijah couldn't find him there. However, when he stopped for a while he found God instead in the stillness of creation, or as one translator puts it, '*In the hush of a gentle stillness*'.

Psalm 46 tells us that though there is noise and trouble all around us and though the waves may be crashing into the sea and there may be chaos all around, we should stop and to '*be still and know that I am God*'. Jesus took time off from his mission of healing and love towards people in order to be in the quiet hillside with his father, God, and in order to refill and refresh himself for the work that God wanted him to do. There is so much spirituality in the world if we take time to rest – to listen – to look – to wonder. As one songwriter so eloquently put it: '*I wondered as I wandered*'.

I wish all those who are going on holiday a wonderful time. Whether you are going on holiday or not, I hope that you will have the opportunity to enjoy the beauty of our created world.

With many good wishes to you all,

Celia Whitman



Appointment of Interim Moderators

It is with very great pleasure we are able to announce that Rev. Celia Whitman and Rev. Dr Jim Tarrant have agreed to become joint Interim Moderators of our church.

Rev. Celia was minister at the thriving Bournemouth Park URC for many years up to her retirement from full-time ministry. At that time, talks were ongoing over the amalgamation of Bournemouth Park with a number of other smaller churches, which ultimately resulted in the Cornerstone URC being formed. Subsequently the new church building was constructed on the site of Bournemouth Park URC.

Rev. Jim was for many years minister of Westcliff URC, at the same time giving service on a number of Synod committees. He has also

been a Synod provincial director of training and taught students who were training for the ministry.

They are therefore very well qualified to give us the pastoral oversight and spiritual guidance which is a most important function of Interim Moderators. In addition they may take the chair at Church and Elders meetings from time to time, and will preach at our church services on a regular basis.

We feel sure that their presence with us will be of very great blessing to our church and we welcome them to this new role of further service for our Lord.

Royston Brackin, Church Secretary

From the Editor

Welcome to the June edition of the Hadleigh Messenger.

My apologies for the late delivery of this edition which is partly due to a horrible cold that I had for over a week.

I must also apologise for not having made any reference to Christian Aid Week in last month's magazine. I usually have at least a page about the annual fundraising campaign and about the work of Christian Aid. Not only did I forget to mention it in the magazine but I also forgot to order envelopes and posters for those churches that normally have a collection for Christian Aid Week. Fortunately, my trusty contact in head office was able to expedite an order and they arrived just in time.

The test pit dig in Lynton Road that I mentioned last month duly took place on 15th and 16th May. The weather was beautiful and the ground was a delight to dig – mainly crumbly soil – but the finds were not very exciting although we did find a couple of very old worked flints. Hopefully, we

will find more when we dig at St Peter's Church in Thundersley on 24th and 25th July.

As you will see, this month's magazine is very wordy with few pictures. The article about Mission Council is a very cut-down version of the reports that appear on the URC website. I have also had to move the Computer Corner section because of an extra-long article in the 'From the Moderator's Blog' section.

I am grateful to Rev. Celia Whitman, one of our new Interim Moderators, for writing a pastoral letter. In the letter she mentions the benefits of holidays and I hope to benefit also from your holidays, or days out, by an influx of articles about the interesting places you have visited. It does make the Editor's job so much easier when I have material to work with so please take some time to put pen to paper or fingers to keyboard to write about your experiences. It doesn't have to be word perfect or beautifully formatted as I am happy to apply the finishing touches.

Malcolm Brown

Computer Corner

50 Things That Made The Modern Economy

**Interesting
radio
programme**

Tim Harford introduces inventions, ideas and innovations that have helped to create the modern economic world. Examples include the pencil, spreadsheets, bricks, the QWERTY keyboard, insurance and the Langstroth beehive.

URL: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08k9pv0/episodes/guide>

A Virtual Tour of the Prittlewell Princely Burial

**Interesting
website**

I'm sure everyone knows about the Prittlewell Anglo-Saxon princely burial, discovered in 2003. It has taken a long time for archaeologists to uncover the secrets of the burial but the most impressive items found are now on permanent display at Southend Central Museum in Victoria Avenue (open Tue-Sat, 9.00am to 5.00pm). This website allows you to see how the items were placed in the chamber and to learn more about them through text and videos.

URL: <https://www.prittlewellprincelyburial.org/museum>

Make A Word Search Puzzle

**Useful
Website**

For anyone interested in making their own word search puzzles (for free), I can recommend this site. I have switched to using it in preference to the former site because it is easier to format the puzzle solution for pasting into Microsoft Word. The site allows you to specify the grid size (up to 25 letters tall/wide), shape (square, tall rectangle, circle or triangle) and the word directions (each direction can be selected independently).

URL: <https://makeawordsearch.net>

Articles for the magazine can be e-mailed to the Editor, Malcolm Brown, at mgbrownmail@yahoo.co.uk.
Opinions expressed in any published articles do not necessarily reflect the view of the Editor or the policy of the United Reformed Church, either locally or nationally.

Tuesday Fellowship Programme for June & July 2019

Date	Time	Meeting
Tue 11 th Jun	2.30pm	Film Show: An old-fashioned trip to the pictures viewing 16mm film trailers, adverts, newsreels and the film 'The Supreme Secret' by Major David Groves
Tue 9 th Jul	3.00pm to 5.00pm	Afternoon Tea <i>Please note times</i>

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

Meeting fee £2.00 – first time free

Annual subscription – £3.00

Church 115th Anniversary

We celebrate the 115th Anniversary of the founding of our church on Sunday 16th June. The first service was held on 20th January 1904 but we celebrate later in the year when the weather is better.

The morning service, which will be a Communion service, will be led by Adrian Tinning, who has been a regular preacher over recent months. Our evening service will be led by Rev. Jim Tarrant, one of our newly-appointed joint Interim Moderators. We are grateful to Adrian and Jim for their support and it is good that they will be with us to help us celebrate.

The evening service will be preceded by the Anniversary Tea, which will take place in the Small Hall, commencing at 5.00pm. If you would like to come to the Anniversary Tea, please ensure that your name is added to the list posted on the noticeboard in the foyer. Representatives from the other Hadleigh churches have been invited as have lay preachers and clergy who serve us so well during the year.

We look forward to a time of fellowship and thanksgiving as we celebrate God's faithfulness to our church here in Hadleigh.

Malcolm Brown

Photo from the Southend Pictorial Telegraph of 25th June 1932



MAYPOLE DANCE AT THE HADLEIGH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH FETE ON WEDNESDAY. (2)

WHAT'S ON

A round-up of future events in the area

Sun 9 Jun 2019	- Rayleigh Trinity Fair from 11.00am to 4.00pm.
Tue 11 Jun 2019	- Coffee Morning & Book Sale at St Peter's Church Hall, Church Road, Thundersley, from 10.30am to 12.30pm. Unlimited tea/coffee £1.10, cakes and pastries from 70p. Cards and present accessories also on sale.
Wed 12 Jun 2019	- Coffee Morning with home-made cakes at St Michael's Church Community Room, St Michael's Road, Daws Heath, from 10.00am to 11.45am. £2.00 for as much coffee as you wish and a piece of cake.
Sat 15 Jun 2019	- Bring & Buy, Plant Sale & Coffee Morning at 63 Mornington Crescent, Hadleigh from 10.00am to 1.00pm. Proceeds to support local Salvation Army Anti-Trafficking work.
ditto	- Community Coffee Morning at Thundersley Methodist Church, Kennington Avenue, Thundersley. From 10.00am to 12 noon. All proceeds to Fair Havens Hospice.
ditto	- Hadleigh Heritage Coffee Morning & Talk - 'A Thundersley Home Scandal' & 'See You In Court' by Andrew Summers - at St James the Less Church. Coffee from 10.30am. Talk starts at 11.00am. Free event.
ditto	- Hadleigh Gardening Association Summer Show at Hadleigh Methodist Church from 2.00pm to 4.00pm.
Sun 16 Jun 2019	- Hadleigh Bowls Club Annual Gala Day at John Burrows Recreation Ground from 12.00pm to 4.00pm. Fun games on the rinks with BBQ, side shows & raffle. Free. Refreshments available. Flat shoes for green.
Wed 19 Jun 2019	- Kingsway Community Cinema presents 'Green Book' at Hadleigh Old Fire Station. Doors open 6.30pm for 7.00pm start. Tickets £5.00 from Eventbrite or at the door if available. Refreshments. Bring a cushion.
Thu 20 Jun 2019	- Poetry Reading Group Meeting at Hadleigh Library. This month's subject - Robert Browning. From 2.30pm to 3.30pm.
Sat 22 Jun 2019	- Trillogy in Concert with 'Songs from the Movies' at St James the Less Church. Starts at 7.30pm. Tickets at the door £10.00. Refreshments served after the concert.
Sun 23 Jun 2019	- Churches Together in Hadleigh Café Church at Costa Coffee, London Road, Hadleigh. From 5.00pm until about 6.15pm. Bring a friend.
Sat 29 Jun 2019	- Local author Hazel Lakeland will be presenting and reading from her new book, Hazel's Story at Hadleigh Library. Starts at 2.30pm. Free event. Books on sale. Refreshments available.
Sat 6 Jul 2019	- St James the Less Hadleigh Fair from 10.30am to 2.30pm. Free admission. With live entertainment, tea and cakes, strawberries and ice cream, games, plants, bric-a-brac, children's toys and books, raffle.
Sat 13 Jul 2019	- Coffee Morning at Hadleigh Methodist Church - 10.00am to 12 noon.
ditto	- Hadleigh & Thundersley Community Archive Drop-in at Hadleigh Library from 10.30am to 12 noon.
ditto	- Daws Heath Village Fayre at St Michael's Field, Daws Heath from 12.30pm to 4.00pm.

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

Mrs Beamish

Mrs Beamish stands in church,
Expression calm and holy
And when the organ plays she mumbles
Hymns extremely slowly.
A pillar of St Botolph's
For twenty years or more,
She does the flowers at Easter
And the brasswork on the door.

But recently St Botolph's
Has gained a brand-new vicar:
His name is Ken, he's single
And he wants the hymns played quicker.
And he's introduced a custom
Which Mrs Beamish hates,
So she rounds upon the person
Next to her and clearly states:

'Don't you dare shake hands with me,
Or offer signs of peace.
You lay a finger on me
And I'll send for the police.
Don't whisper 'Peace be with you'
This is the C of E,
So bend your knee, say thou and thee
And keep your hands off me!'

Ken tells us love your neighbour
And Mrs Beamish sneers.
'I only love my neighbours
If I've known them thirty years.'
Even when it isn't Christmas,
He lets youngsters in the church;
He's altered all the music
After audience research.
They shout out 'Alleluia!'
They don't act like me and you:

The young women don't wear hats
And the young men often do.
And they seem to like their hands
Enthusiastically wrung,
Then they turn to Mrs Beamish
And they feel her acid tongue:

'Don't you dare shake hands with me,
I don't know where you've been.
Don't lay a finger on me
Or you'll feel this tambourine!
Don't whisper "Peace be with you" –
This is the C of E,
So bend the knee, say Thou and Thee
And leave your hands off me.'

In the beginning was the word,
Read out loud by Thora Hird;
Harry Secombe then would scream
'Morning is broken' by a stream.
Now the organ's gone for scrap,
Every vicar's got the clap!
Alleluia! Mrs Beamish, Mrs Beamish,
Alleluia! she's squeamish, she's squeamish.

'Don't you dare shake hands with me,
Or turn to me and smile,
Or you'll end up spitting teeth out,
Face downwards in the aisle.
Don't you dare shake hands with me,
This is the C of E.
If you go just one inch too far,
You'll end up wearing that guitar.
One false step in my direction,
You'll need to believe in the resurrection,
So bend the knee, say Thou and Thee,
And keep your hands off me!'

Written by Peter Skellern and Richard Stilgoe.

To hear a rendition by Richard Stilgoe visit <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uc80G6Yzu04>.



Keeping Death Off the Roads

A group of very senior retired clergymen was sitting around talking about their ailments:
"My arms are so weak I can hardly hold this cup of coffee," said one.
"Yes, I know. My cataracts are so bad I can't even see my coffee," replied another.
"I can't turn my head because of the arthritis in my neck," said a third, to which several nodded weakly in agreement.
"My blood pressure pills make me dizzy," another went on.
"I guess that's the price we pay for getting old," winced an old vicar as he shook his head.
Then there was a short moment of silence.
"Well, it's not that bad," said one man cheerfully. "Thank God we can all still drive!"

Mission Council – 13th to 15th May 2019

Day one: 13th May 2019

The spring meeting of Mission Council, the United Reformed Church's (URC) executive body of the General Assembly, opened on 13 May at High Leigh Conference Centre, in Hoddesdon. It began with worship led by the Revd David Coaker, Chaplain to Derek Estill, Moderator of General Assembly. Rev. Neil Thorogood, Principal of Westminster College, Cambridge, gave the sermon during the opening Communion Service.

Rev. Nigel Uden, Moderator of the URC's General Assembly, led the introductory session. Mission Council approved the minutes of its last meeting in November 2018.

Paper O1: General secretariat recruitment –

Two members of the United Reformed Church's General Secretariat retire in 2020 – the General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship). Paper O1 considered the recruitment process for their replacement, and the creation of a denominational strategy for the future. The paper contains two resolutions. The first set out the new job descriptions and person specifications. The resolution was passed by consensus. The second resolution was to create a task group looking at a denominational strategy for the future. This was referred to the General Secretary to be brought back to a later meeting of Mission Council.

Paper I3: Carbon targets – This paper argued that the URC's environmental policy should be updated to endorse a net zero carbon emission target for the UK. In Scotland, the goal is to reach net zero by 2045 and in Wales also 2050 because of the relative ability of those areas. The proposal in the paper was to campaign and work for net zero well before 2050. After a minor amendment, the resolutions were passed by consensus.

Fossil fuels - Paper Z1: URC investment policy & Paper X1: Creating a climate of change – a new approach to ethical investment – Rev. Dick Gray presented Paper Z1 on behalf of the Investment Committee and outlined two arguments: whether it is more effective to disinvest from fossil fuel companies or to keep the investments in order to better engage with them. The Rev. Dr David Pickering, Moderator of the National Synod of Scotland, then presented Paper X1 and reiterated just how much climate change has been featuring in the news recently.

Dr Pickering ending his presentation by saying: 'Mission Council – we should hear what our grassroots are saying and respond.'

Rev. Paul Rochester, General Secretary of Free Churches Group (FCG), spoke to Mission Council on the first evening of its meeting. The core area of the group's work is chaplaincy in prison, healthcare and education. There are 7,200 prisoners in England and Wales who are registered as Free Church, and they are ministered to by 260 Free Church chaplains. While FCG healthcare chaplains work with NHS patients of all denominations, particularly Free Churches, they are working on support for people coming out of hospital as well as in-patients.

Day two: 14th May 2019

Day two opened with worship. The theme of the Rev. Neil Thorogood's Tuesday morning Bible study was 'listening to God speaking to us through each other.'

Fossil fuels - Paper Z1 & X1 (continued) – After a lively debate, a show of cards was made as to what direction Mission Council was warming to. A break was then held in the proceedings for information to be processed.

Paper D1: The discipleship development fund – proposed the establishment of a discipleship development fund managed by the resource-sharing task group with funding normally restricted to £200 a year for each applicant. Mission Council voted to reword the policy to allow Assembly-accredited lay preachers to have access to the fund. The resolutions were passed noting disagreement.

Paper D2: Education and learning committee – marks of ministry – This paper outlined the marks of ministry that the URC looks for in Ministers of Word and Sacrament. Mission Council welcomed the document, but expressed some concerns. Rev. Professor Neil Messer assured Mission Council that the document was intended to offer decision-makers some indications of the kind of qualities to look for in a minister, not to be exclusive or restrictive. On that understanding that a revised version would be brought to a future meeting, Mission Council passed the resolutions.

Paper R1: Good practice standards on child and adult protection & Paper R2: URC's safeguarding strategic plan 2019-2023 – Mission Council recognised the draft

safeguarding strategic plan as the next step for the realisation of the recommendations from the Past Case Review Learning Group. The six objectives of the plan aim to effect culture change within the URC by improving its safeguarding policies, practices and procedures.

En bloc resolutions – A number of resolutions were passed en bloc without debate, having been deemed uncontroversial.

Fossil fuels - Paper Z1 & Paper X1 (continued)

- These papers were brought back to see if a substantive motion could be determined, using majority voting principles, deciding which of the papers would go forward to be debated further. After further debate, Mission Council then held a majority vote about which paper to take forward to further debate. Sixteen voted in favour of Paper Z1 but a significant majority voted for Paper X1. A discussion was then held around the draft resolutions in Paper X1, and minor amendments were made. The resolutions then passed by consensus with no objections.

Paper M3: Acting with strategic intent – Mission Council received an update to presentations made at the last two Mission Councils about future strategic planning. There is an appetite for radical change, the report said, but more detail is required. A resolution requesting an exploration into the amalgamation of trust bodies failed to be agreed.

Paper N2: Task group on General Assembly – matters referred to synods – Mission Council agreed to change the structure of the Church so that each synod would send 16 representatives to General Assembly. It also agreed that at least one third should be ministers and CRCWs and at least one third should be elders.

Friends on Faith Adventures – Dr Sam Richards, Head of Children's and Youth Work (CYW), gave a presentation about 'Friends on Faith Adventures', a new initiative created jointly by CYW and Pilots. This local church programme is for children aged 5 to 11+ and designed either to be a standalone venture or to support existing children's work. Mission Council warmly welcomed the initiative.

Day three: 15th May 2019

Worship and Bible study – The last day of Mission Council's business began with worship led by Rev. David Coaker, Chaplain to the Moderator of General Assembly. Rev. Neil Thorogood spoke to Mission Council on the parable of the prodigal son.

Paper M3: Acting with strategic intent (continued) – The resolution was passed with consensus.

Paper T1: Ministerial incapacity advisory group proposal for work on a redrawn ministerial disciplinary process – This paper presented the case for a new process in dealing with disciplinary cases involving Ministers and Church Related Community Workers. A resolution to approve preparation of a new process was passed by consensus.

Paper N1: General Assembly task group – moderators, clerks and councils – This report looked at the General Assembly from 2020-2030. Mission Council affirmed the vision, nature, scope and responsibilities of the Moderator of General Assembly. Mission Council also agreed that the Moderator of General Assembly will serve for one year, and Synods can nominate the names of a minister and an elder each year for consideration.

With the return to an annual General Assembly, the Mission Council agreed that General Assembly should meet for one 48-hour meeting at a time and venue to be determined; that it should initiate the process of changing its name from Mission Council to Assembly Executive; that each Synod will send four representatives with an option that the moderator of the synod can be one of them. After next year's General Assembly, the assembly arrangements committee and the Mission Council Advisory Group will be discharged and abolished, and a new standing committee of the assembly, known as the Business Committee, will be established to supervise practical arrangements for the assembly and the Mission Council and advise the Moderator of the General Assembly on their official duties.

Mission Council asked the Nominations Committee to seek an Assistant Clerk, who would serve in the first instance for three years from 2020. The term of Rev. Michael Hopkins, the current Clerk, ends after General Assembly 2024. The current rules of the URC allows for an initial term of six years followed by a further term of up to four years.

Conclusion – At the end of the day's business Derek Estill, Moderator of the General Assembly, and Rev. John Proctor, General Secretary of the URC, thanked Mission Council and all the people behind the scenes for helping to put the event together.

D-Day Memories of Rev. Mike Crooks, Royal Navy Chaplain

Five weeks before D-Day I attended a conference for chaplains (mostly Army) who were going over on the day. This took place at the Combined Operations HQ in Whitehall. There were at least 60 of us present. We were addressed by General Sturges and the Second Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Algernon Willis, given briefs about what to expect on the beaches and told to draw morphia from the MO. In addition the Naval Chaplains were asked to draw a Church Pennant from stores, which was to be flown by the ship you were visiting if it was standing off-shore.

On the Saturday before D-Day I joined an American LST (Landing Ship, Tank) – LST 529 – at anchor in the Thames Estuary. Designed to carry tanks in the space below and transport on deck, it was fitted out as a hospital ship (of sorts) for the return journey, with rows of folding bunks on each side of the tank space and an operating table in the Ward Room (Officers Mess).

On boarding the ship I found that the troops were feeling the strain of waiting. All ships had been loaded and ‘sealed’ a week previously with nobody allowed to leave – it was stressful. The following morning (Sunday) I had a Holy Communion Service at the intersection of two passages. (Difficult!...like catacombs.) This was a momentous occasion, for those communicants were all aware that in a few days time they might be dead – and some of them were.

The Holy Mysteries of Christian Communion probably meant more to them that day in those overcrowded passages than at any other time in their lives. I shall never forget the look in the eyes of some. We were all trimmed down to size at that moment. At the end of the service the ‘sealed’ ship rule was broken for I was given a launch and allowed to go and take prayers and Holy Communion in several other ships. It was a solemn and strenuous day ending with a Service that I conducted on the ramp in the tank space.

The following morning (Monday), the long wait ended. The engines came alive, the rumble of the anchor chain, the engine room telegraph and we were off. It is impossible to describe the feeling of relief. It was strangely exhilarating. The sense of brooding suddenly evaporated and gave way to smiling faces, jokes, light-heartedness and rudery.

Out to sea we went, past North Foreland, Ramsgate, the Goodwins, much too far out in the

Channel for my liking. There was France on our left with all its heavy coastal artillery – they must presently blow us to pieces – but strangely not a shot was fired. Two destroyers passed at speed laying a welcome smoke screen and on we went in this ever-growing, awe-inspiring fleet heading for ‘Piccadilly Circus’, that area south of the Isle of Wight where the ships from the East met those from the West and were joined by a monumental armada from Portsmouth, Southampton and the Solent. This was something the world had never seen before, the biggest invasion in history – 7,000 ships and craft. The Spanish Armada had 130!

Night came and another day – D-Day. All were up and about (did we ever go to bed?). Looking down from the bridge we saw men moving about, some sitting on top of the covered wagons, one playing a banjo, one having a haircut, gunners swivelling their weapons – a spirit of nonchalance. Then came the voice of the BBC Home Service at full volume throughout the ship. ‘Under the command of General Eisenhower, allied naval forces began landing allied armies this morning on the northern coast of France.’

The already high spirits went even higher – Jubilation! But this was short-lived for we were approaching a large curious looking object in the water and passed close by it. It was the underside of an upturned landing craft. It had a sobering effect and your imagination is as good as mine.

Soon we were at our appointed landing place and were ordered to anchor off-shore until the beachhead was secure as we were carrying highly secret equipment which must not fall into enemy hands. My church pennant was now hoisted. Canadian and British troops had stormed the defences and we listened to the battle further along the beach and just behind the rising ground in front of us.

A signal came from ashore, ‘Send in your chaplain.’ Three US sailors delivered me ashore in one of our assault craft. On grounding they dropped the ramp and I was about to step into the water when I was suddenly swept off my feet by two large sailors and planted dry-shod on the sand. Then they began to dance about with boyish delight at being on JUNO beach on D-Day. I remember thinking at the time – ‘I wish to God they would do it somewhere else.’

I went on my way up the beach walking (like that Old Testament character, Agag, who ‘walked delicately’). There was a Sherman Flail Tank going to and fro exploding mines and I was astounded at the number of them, mostly small but occasionally a big one when the tank would immediately stop (and the chains hang limply down) whilst the driver had time to recover from the blinding blast and concussion right in front of his face. At this time things were relatively quiet apart from sniping. Of course, there were artillery shells, mines and booby traps and occasional hit-and-run raids by enemy aircraft. It was no place for German pilots that day for we had 11,000 aircraft in the sky.

My first encounter was with three Canadian soldiers who were still miraculously able to walk. They had been in a slit trench, five of them, when a bomb landed in one end. When it exploded so did a petrol bowser across the road. Those three men had no hair on their faces – no eyelashes – no eyebrows – no hair below the line of their helmets, and their faces were scorched scarlet. They were in a sorry state, scarcely knowing where they were. I asked about the other two.

‘Couldn’t find a trace of the first; the bomb was on him, and the second is in there – all we could find of him.’ He pointed to a sack on the ground. You could pick it up with one hand.

They had made tea, boiling the water in half a jerry-can and throwing in cubes – of tea, sugar, milk from their emergency rations. It looked awful, but was welcome to them in their condition. They deserved to survive. Having stayed with them for a time I moved on to the wounded on stretchers, the majority of them were Germans as they had suffered a fearful bombardment from sea and air before our landing, and then on to the burial of the dead. (These casualties were later exhumed and moved to war cemeteries.) There was much work to be done that day – ‘the longest day.’ The briefest survey must include my admiration for the doctors and sick bay attendants.

Being now in my 80th year, memory is unreliable for the sequence of events as I had at least 16 Channel crossings in the ensuing weeks. But I vividly remember the rows of dead German soldiers all carefully laid out on the ground by our orderlies with the contents of their pockets and identity discs in bags attached to their uniforms, ready to be sent to their next of kin. They looked so young compared with our more mature soldiers. I remember the farmyards and paddocks near Courseulles, where horses and cattle lay dead in

the fields, pigs with their feet in the air and groups of cows still alive, crying out pitifully to be milked.

There were two exciting days and infernally noisy nights with vehicles, tanks and armoured cars, pouring ashore past our high and dry landing craft in a constant stream, everybody blazing away with their guns at the sound of aircraft passing over. It is impossible to describe the volume of noise, and flak going up like a firework display to end all – and of course our own shrapnel coming down like rain. We were all in danger of being killed by our own gunfire.

And then the journey home on the third night, all bunks filled with wounded. We did our best for them, but there was always a feeling of inadequacy. At Theological College we had not been taught how to cope with dying young men, whose bodies were beyond recall. But in those college days wise men were there who were able to detonate the latent ideas in our minds, and how to come to grips with the purpose of existence. My own concept of God had a long way to go in order to comprehend the mystery of our Christian religion. In that process the Hand of God was with us.

The Crucified One was strangely with us – and was still there on D-Day when the support of His strength, His suffering and His Holy Spirit were desperately needed. He was with us. Looking back upon the momentous events of that time, unequalled in history, I maintain that the troops were marvellous. Remember, those soldiers, sailors and airmen were businessmen, teachers, bus-drivers, lawyers, factory workers, writers, road sweepers – you name it. They didn’t want war. They didn’t want to be there. Their place was at home. But we were all called upon to fulfil a function, a necessary task. no matter how awful. The Chaplain’s role was one of rare privilege, carrying out duties of compassion, healing, evangelism, moral support.

These are the words of a BBC announcement broadcast about a week after D-Day: ‘Many thousands of men went forth for righteousness sake and no other reason. The Chaplains were asked, and strongly asked, to make our men as Christian as we could.’ Today, I have a golden opportunity to turn that the other way round and declare – as I remember the fortitude of those young men, their devotion to duty, comradeship, laughter and winning sense of humour – they were the ones who made me a better Christian than I ever was before.

Family News

A Pentecost Prayer

Spirit of God, come among us on this Pentecost day.
Make this day a re-birth-day for your people.
Make us passionate in our faith,
strong in our commitment,
courageous beyond our imagining,
and willing to love, and keep on loving, without reservation, we pray.
Send your holy wind among us,
not as a gentle breeze to lull us into relaxation, comfort and complacency
– as people gathered together in some kind of benign social club.
Let it be a wind of fire,
to burn into our hearts a passion for your truth and a desire to share it.
Give us tongues of fire, God,
not to babble incomprehensibly,
but to speak out plainly for justice and fairness:
to be the voices of those in this world made mute because they are
downtrodden and oppressed:
to speak the language of peace in a world bombarded by violence and
war, arms-deals and greed:
to speak of the grace, bewildering in its simplicity, that sets hearts ... and
minds ... and souls free, through Jesus.

An extract from a prayer by David Allen from Australia



Pentecost Reflection

People sometimes talk about Pentecost as the birthday of the Church. I've never been completely sure about this and I think that the birthday of the Church is the birthday of Jesus Christ. Or perhaps, if they want to put it slightly differently, it is Easter - the beginning of the community gathered around the risen Christ.

In fact you can't really give a simple date of when the Church began. It is what happens when Jesus is around and gathers people to him in the name of his father, to reconcile them and build them into a new community. But Pentecost does celebrate something very essential and very new about the reality of the infant Church as the story is told to us in the Acts of the Apostles; it is the moment when the friends of Jesus discover that they can communicate to all sorts of people they never thought that they would be speaking to.

They have the gift of tongues. They can go out and make sense of all this great crowd of pilgrims assembling from every nation in Jerusalem. They can actually build bridges with strangers and so while there is already a community gathered around the risen Christ, the Church has begun.

It is at this moment it seems that the earliest Christians really begin to understand that what they say about Jesus is something that can be

communicated in principle to absolutely anyone, to every human being to the ends of the Earth.

So Pentecost is the moment when the promise and the command given at the end of St Matthew's Gospel becomes a reality. 'Go and make disciples to the ends of the Earth', says Jesus, 'make disciples of all nations'. And so at Pentecost the Holy Spirit comes down on the Church to build bridges with strangers.

It is a reminder that when we think about the Holy Spirit in the Christian Church we are always thinking about the way God makes connections. It is the Holy Spirit that connects us with Jesus and through Jesus to God the Father. It is the Holy Spirit that brings communion relationship between Christian believers. It is the Holy Spirit that gives us the words we speak to God in prayer, so St Paul tells us.

And it is the Holy Spirit, so the Acts of the Apostles seems to say, that helps us communicate effectively, 'Christianly' with one another. It is the Holy Spirit that gives us the words to share good news with one another and even to take that good news into environments that are strange and unfamiliar to us.

Dr Rowan Williams



From The Bible

Then Peter stood up with the other eleven apostles and in a loud voice began to speak to the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, listen to me and let me tell you what this means. These people are not drunk, as you suppose; it is only nine o'clock in the morning. Instead, this is what the prophet Joel spoke about:

'This is what I will do in the last days, God says:
I will pour out my Spirit on everyone.
Your sons and daughters will proclaim my message;
your young men will see visions,
and your old men will have dreams.
Yes, even on my servants, both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will proclaim my message.
I will perform miracles in the sky above and wonders on the earth below.
There will be blood, fire, and thick smoke;
the sun will be darkened, and the moon will turn red as blood,
before the great and glorious Day of the Lord comes.
And then, whoever calls out to the Lord for help will be saved.'

Acts 2:14-21 (Good News Bible)



Liberation yesterday, today and tomorrow

Nigel Uden, Moderator of the United Reformed Church General Assembly, sees liberation in a new light, on a visit to the Channel Islands

My father's caution about me becoming a minister was that I would be bored. If one is not part of the Church, that is perhaps an unsurprising concern. But in this case, my father's concern was not justified. Long before he died, I think he recognised how stimulating ministry is.

He wouldn't have used this language, but what could be more stimulating than to be caught up in the Body of Christ, with its vocation to help the world know what God has given it in Jesus Christ? Apart from anything else, I have never stopped learning, never ceased to have new experiences, and never finished encountering different people and their cultures.



**Liberation Sculpture, St Helier, Jersey
Philip Jackson 1995**

A recent new experience of mine was going to the Channel Islands to visit the United Reformed churches on both Guernsey and Jersey. My only previous trip had been a fleeting preaching engagement ten years ago at the Sion Church in the St John's parish on Jersey.

Serendipitously, I was visiting the islands as they were marking the 74th anniversary of their liberation from the German occupation

throughout much of the Second World War. Of course, I had learned about the war in history lessons, but there is nothing like being in a place where it is remembered by people who suffered it, survived it or continue to be shaped by it. In St Helier, Jersey, I saw parades and processions, singing and speeches, formal finery and battle fatigues.

From my advantageous seat – courtesy of an ecumenical colleague I met by representing the URC at the Methodist Council – I listened to the Bailiff (the Chief Justice and legislative president of the bailiwick) exhort us to understand liberation and freedom as more than history. Liberation is a contemporary imperative too.

I joined the heartfelt 'hear our prayer' as the Roman Catholic Dean of Jersey prayed for the Channel Islands and for their former enemies. I was arrested by the speech in the States Assembly by Deputy Carolyn Labey, the island's Assistant Minister for Economic Development. She urged her compatriots to recognise that, as citizens of the only part of Britain ever to have received humanitarian aid, there is a role for them in today's world, where still too many depend upon aid.

In a moment of extraordinary intensity, I heard the people in front of me speaking German. I greeted them, and we had a deeply moving conversation. They told a story of the liberation we had been remembering over the previous 90 minutes, and of the way we best relate to each other across Europe today.

I left those people to seek their return sailing for France, en route to Munich, and mused upon it all over lunch in a well-known coffee shop. At first, as I sat down, I was chuckling, after having been teased by a holidaying Scot who, as I paid and proffered my Costa loyalty card, said: 'Ah, so you're an habitué!' But then I became more reflective. I began to ponder the Church's contribution in today's febrile world of inhumanity, division and a suffering that requires humanitarian aid – just as did the 1940s Channel Islands.

I recalled two books I've read recently: David Nott's *War Doctor* (Picador, 2019) and Aehem Ahmad's *The Pianist of Yarmouk* (Michael Joseph, 2019), where the inexpressible tragedy of contemporary Syria is described with a compassion and wisdom made all the more insightful by their respective backgrounds in medicine and music. Both authors are driven to far-reaching humanitarian responses to our inhumanity with each other. One cannot help but feel urged into a solidarity with them. Maybe a donation? Or a campaigning letter?

I called to mind Stanley Hauerwas' emphasis upon 'the eschatological character of the Gospel'. There's a long-term end game, when God's purposes will be fulfilled in Christ. In Liberation Square, we were retrospective. Something three quarters of a century ago cast our minds back. In the speeches, we were brought up to date: as we

celebrate yesterday's liberation, let's strive for today's freedom.

The Church's perspective, though, is simultaneously tri-focal. At one and the same time, we remember, and we are alive to the here and now; and we are invited to trust God's future, believing that, 'in the fullness of time, God will renew and gather in one all things in heaven and on earth through Christ, and be perfectly honoured and adored.' (URC Alternative Statement of Faith, 1997) We are people for whom liberation is indeed yesterday, today and tomorrow.

I came home with much to keep pondering, and with a renewed imperative to pray for liberation wherever it is denied. None of that is boring,

Nigel Uden

Posted 12 May 2019

Word Search – Pentecost

Words found in the scriptures about the coming of the Holy Spirit

U	D	R	Q	N	L	M	Q	I	W	Y	Z	J	C	M	F	H	I	F	E	
V	I	R	O	J	R	Q	G	G	R	I	E	J	Z	D	E	M	X	V	D	AMAZED
J	H	O	E	T	S	E	R	R	G	R	E	X	D	J	U	D	E	A	O	BLOOD
M	M	D	T	A	I	L	C	Z	U	B	I	G	R	S	R	P	S	V	U	DARKNESS
E	S	P	H	B	M	X	A	S	W	U	B	S	U	L	I	W	J	X	I	DREAMS
M	Q	Q	P	Y	S	S	A	Q	Z	I	B	X	N	L	S	S	N	K	E	DRUNK
N	H	P	E	G	X	L	W	I	V	X	N	C	K	S	O	W	P	R	O	FIRE
F	M	Y	N	C	E	U	L	S	V	L	J	D	K	A	B	R	I	J	M	HOLY
Z	B	E	T	M	M	S	U	I	B	Z	R	Y	V	H	F	D	M	W		JERUSALEM
K	J	M	E	Z	O	Y	X	Q	S	S	I	J	D	E	R	T	F	H	T	JUDEA
A	G	E	C	C	K	Q	O	D	I	K	Q	C	C	D	S	P	K	O	N	LORD
P	L	V	O	Y	X	U	M	W	O	R	D	O	A	M	P	S	R	L	E	MOON
G	Y	S	S	S	M	P	C	V	N	X	T	K	A	E	I	A	D	Y	L	PENTECOST
T	H	D	T	Q	U	O	R	W	S	B	K	U	Z	E	R	H	V	W	O	PROPHECY
O	K	K	E	W	N	D	O	O	D	B	H	P	E	I	C	N	Y	I		SAVED
N	M	O	C	Z	N	R	D	K	P	D	G	G	F	R	T	A	F	V	V	SPIRIT
G	I	B	S	S	A	O	L	O	P	H	P	S	S	E	N	K	R	A	D	SUN
U	D	T	R	K	O	M	I	V	M	V	E	U	Y	J	W	M	B	H	P	TONGUES
E	I	N	V	L	Z	O	A	A	V	W	B	S	N	P	N	C	F	C	F	VIOLENT
S	Y	U	B	P	H	P	C	D	J	B	N	G	Y	N	P	O	C	Y	B	VISIONS
																				WIND

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

CHURCH DIARY FOR JUNE 2019

DAY	TIME	EVENT
Saturday 1 st	8.30am	Men's Breakfast Meeting
Sunday 2 nd	10.30am 6.30pm	Morning Service - Rev. Celia Whitman Evening Service with Holy Communion - Mr Jim Clubb
Monday 3 rd	8.00pm - 10.00pm	Ladies Recreation Group
Tuesday 4 th	No session - cancelled	Alphabet Club for Parents/Carers & Tots
Thursday 6 th	10.30am - 12 noon	Coffee Morning
Sunday 9 th	10.30am	Morning Service - Major Alan Bennett
Monday 10 th	8.00pm - 10.00pm	Ladies Recreation Group
Tuesday 11 th	No session - cancelled 2.30pm	Alphabet Club for Parents/Carers & Tots Tuesday Fellowship - Major David Groves Film Show: Real 16mm film trailers, adverts, newsreels and the film 'The Supreme Secret'
Wednesday 12 th	7.30pm	ELDERS' MEETING
Thursday 13 th	10.30am - 12 noon	Coffee Morning
Sunday 16 th	10.30am 5.00pm 6.30pm	Anniversary Morning Service with HC - Mr Adrian Tinning Anniversary Tea Anniversary Evening Service - Rev. Dr Jim Tarrant MTh
Monday 17 th	8.00pm - 10.00pm	Ladies Recreation Group
Tuesday 18 th	No session - cancelled	Alphabet Club for Parents/Carers & Tots
Thursday 20 th	10.30am - 12 noon	Coffee Morning with bric-a-brac table for Christian Aid
Sunday 23 rd	10.30am	Morning Service - Rev. John Ambrose PGCE (Ox)
Monday 24 th	8.00pm - 10.00pm	Ladies Recreation Group
Tuesday 25 th	No session - cancelled	Alphabet Club for Parents/Carers & Tots
Thursday 27 th	10.30am - 12 noon	Coffee Morning
Sunday 30 th	10.30am	Morning Service - Rev. Jack Roche MA

God stays the same

Fashions fade,
favourites are erased,
A-listers evaporate;
God stays the same.

Machines rust,
innovation turns to dust,
computers crash;
God stays the same.

Politicians U-turn,
new solutions crash and burn,
headlines become yesterdays news;
God stays the same.

Friends forget,
lovers cause regret,
families fail;
God stays the same.

Who was?
Who is?
Who is to come?
Jesus stays the same.

Sam Hargreaves