

# THE HADLEIGH MESSENGER

December 2019 & January 2020



“They saw the child with his mother Mary,  
and they bowed down and worshipped him.”

*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

### **Interim Moderators:**

Rev. Jim Tarrant/Rev. Celia Whitman

### **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)

Mrs Mary Milne

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??*

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 2019

Sun 1 <sup>st</sup> Dec	10.30am	Gift Service	Rev. Celia Whitman
	6.30pm	Evening Service with Holy Communion	Mr Jim Clubb with Mrs Heather Brown
Sun 8 <sup>th</sup> Dec	10.30am	Morning Service	Major Alan Bennett
Sun 15 <sup>th</sup> Dec	10.30am	Morning Service with Holy Communion	Mr Adrian Tinning
Sun 22 <sup>nd</sup> Dec	10.30am	Morning Service	Mr Adrian Tinning
	17.00pm	Christmas Celebration	Rev. Dr Jim Tarrant MA MTh
Sun 29 <sup>th</sup> Dec	10.30am	Morning Service	Mr Wilf Tyler

## SUNDAY MORNING DUTY ROTAS FOR DECEMBER 2019

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

## FLOWER ROTA

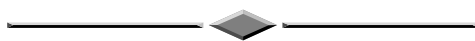
Sun 1 <sup>st</sup> Dec	John Rice - in memory of Barbara's birthday
Sun 8 <sup>th</sup> Dec	
Sun 15 <sup>th</sup> Dec	
Sun 22 <sup>nd</sup> Dec	Jean Reeve - in memory of her father's birthday
Sun 29 <sup>th</sup> Dec	

### ELDERS' MEETING

Wed 11<sup>th</sup> Dec 6.00pm

### CHURCH MEETING

No meeting in Dec



## Christmas according to Scrooge's nephew

“There are many things from which I might have derived good, by which I have not profited, I dare say,” returned the nephew. ‘Christmas among the rest. But I am sure I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round – apart from the veneration due to its sacred name and origin, if anything belonging to it can be apart from that – as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys. And therefore, uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good, and will do me good; and I say, God bless it!’”

Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol*

## PREACHING ARRANGEMENTS FOR JANUARY 2020

Sun 5 <sup>th</sup> Jan	10.30am	Morning Service	Mrs Machrina Ejaz
	6.30pm	Evening Service with Holy Communion	Mr Jim Clubb with Mrs Heather Brown
Sun 12 <sup>th</sup> Jan	10.30am	Morning Service	Mr Jim Clubb
Sun 19 <sup>th</sup> Jan	10.30am	Morning Service with Holy Communion	Rev. Dr Jim Tarrant MA MTh
Sun 26 <sup>th</sup> Jan	10.30am	Morning Service	Mrs Janette Stevens

## SUNDAY MORNING DUTY ROTAS FOR JANUARY 2020

	ELDER	STEWARD	REFRESHMENTS
Sun 5 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Heather Brown	Doreen Churchill	Jean Reeve
Sun 12 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Malcolm Brown	Ann Purkiss	Kay Watson
Sun 19 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Jean Reeve [Holy Communion]	June Gargrave	Doreen Churchill
Sun 26 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Heather Brown	Janet Wimbleton	Janet Wimbleton

## FLOWER ROTA FOR JANUARY 2020

Sun 5 <sup>th</sup> Jan	
Sun 12 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Marion Fidell - in memory of parents' birthdays (11 <sup>th</sup> & 13 <sup>th</sup> )
Sun 19 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Jean Reeve - birthday (13 <sup>th</sup> )
Sun 26 <sup>th</sup> Jan	

### ELDERS' MEETING

Wed 15<sup>th</sup> Jan 6.00pm

### CHURCH MEETING

Thu 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan 12.30pm

## Meetings in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2020

- Sun 19<sup>th</sup> Jan 2020 - 6.00pm - UNITED SERVICE at SA Temple
- Mon 20<sup>th</sup> Jan 2020 - 7.30pm - Methodist Church
- Tue 21<sup>st</sup> Jan 2020 - 2.30pm? - St Barnabas Church
- Wed 22<sup>nd</sup> Jan 2020 - 11.00am? - SA Temple
- Fri 24<sup>th</sup> Jan 2020 - 2.30pm? - St Michael's Church

Note: Times with question marks are yet to be confirmed. See poster in 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.

## Pastoral letter from Celia

One of our Interim Moderators, Rev. Celia Whitman, has kindly written a Christmas pastoral letter.

I am writing this Christmas message in autumn, well before Christmas, but this is what happens in the cycle of life. We have Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter and in the Church calendar we have Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, Harvest and then Christmas again.

With this continuous cycle of events it is important for us not to see life as a tedious boring treadmill to work through somehow, and that we get some pleasure out of the differing seasons and events that take place year after year.

Regarding Christmas, we can easily get so tied up with writing the cards, getting the food, buying presents and the other thousand and one things that we feel we have to do at this time of the year that we forget the more spiritual, tranquil side to Christmas – yes tranquil, even amidst the hustle and bustle that Christmas brings and the difficult side of life.

It is important not to leave Christ out of Christmas. Many of us are busy and sometimes overtired at Christmas, but seeing the look in a child's face as they talk about Christmas, and the wonder in a child's face as they take part in the nativity play often catches a childlike simplicity and spirituality for us all to see. The innocence of a child, the innocence of a baby called Jesus

coming into the world to show us real love is what Christmas is all about.

Jesus said, 'Blessed are the little children, they are close to the kingdom of heaven.' This Christmas, I hope some of the love that the Saviour brings shines on you and through you, and that, somehow, the spirituality of Christmas touches you and your loved ones.

As you celebrate the coming of Jesus into this world, spare a time to remember the sad, rejected and homeless because, as we were reminded, the shepherds were the rejected of society but the first people to see Jesus. Humble Shepherds and mighty Kings bowed down as one to worship the Christ child and by doing so they acknowledged the faith, hope and love of God focussed in a tiny baby who came and changed the world forever.

*Love came down at Christmas, love all lovely,  
love divine.*

*Love shall be our token, love be yours and love  
be mine,*

*Love to God and all people.*

*Love the gift, the warmth, the sign.*

May you all have a wonderful Christmas.

*Celia*

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### From the Bible – Isaiah 40:3-11 (NIV)

A voice of one calling: "In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

A voice says, "Cry out."

And I said, "What shall I cry?"

"All people are like grass, and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever."

You who bring good news to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good news to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!"

See, the Sovereign Lord comes with power, and he rules with a mighty arm. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.

## From the Editor

Welcome to the December 2019 and January 2020 edition of the *Hadleigh Messenger*. Although late (again), this month's magazine has turned into a bumper edition with twenty pages.

I have included another article from the Hadleigh & Thundersley Community Archive about Len Doust. Ron Hurrell has kindly sent some personal memories of Len, whom he sometimes quotes at Methodist Church bible study meetings.

As you can see below, Wilf Tyler has also responded to an item in last month's magazine by

providing more information about the hymn 'The love of God by far'. It is always good to get feedback so thank you Wilf.

For those interested in the image on the front cover, it is an oil painting on wood by Flemish Renaissance artist Key Willem entitled 'The Adoration of the Magi'.

May I take this opportunity to wish everyone who reads the *Hadleigh Messenger* a blessed Christmas and a healthy New Year, especially those who I rarely – or never – see!

*Malcolm Brown*

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## 'The love of God is greater far' – postscript

In the November magazine, I included the words of the hymn 'The love of God is greater far' and gave some history about the writer, Frederick Martin Lehman, and how he came to write the hymn. I mentioned that the hymn did not appear in our hymn books but Adrian Tinning thought that it may have appeared in a Billy Graham song book.

Wilf Tyler has been in touch with the following additional information, which confirms Adrian's thought:

"I can confirm that 'The Love of God is greater far' appeared in a Billy Graham song book. Indeed, it was number 89 in the Greater London Crusade song book used in 1954 at Harringay Arena. I cannot remember it being sung by the congregation but it was sung by Beverley Shea on several occasions and at least twice by the choir. As I read it through in the Messenger, I was singing it to myself and could just picture Cliff Burrows conducting us with Tedd Smith on the piano and Paul Mickelson on the organ. The hymn was also included in the 1955 song book printed for the Kelvin Hall Crusade in Glasgow although I cannot recall it being sung in the two weeks that my parents and I were up there in the choir.

In the song book, the following note is printed below the music: 'The last stanza of this song was pencilled on the wall of a narrow room of an asylum by a man said to have been demented. The profound lines were discovered after his death.'

Many thanks to Wilf for enlightening readers further.

*Malcolm Brown*

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## Christmas crackers

- What's the most popular Christmas wine? 'But I don't like Brussels sprouts!'
- Why are Christmas trees very bad at knitting? Because they always drop their needles.
- Why did no-one bid for Rudolph and Blitzen on eBay? Because they were two deer.
- Why did Santa get a parking ticket on Christmas Eve? He left his sleigh in a snow parking zone!
- How will Christmas dinner be different after Brexit? No Brussels!
- Why was the snowman rummaging in the bag of carrots? He was picking his nose!

Articles for the magazine can be e-mailed to the Editor, Malcolm Brown, at [mgbrownmail@yahoo.co.uk](mailto: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 Dec 2019 & Jan 2020

Date	Time	Meeting
Tue 10 <sup>th</sup> Dec	2.30pm	Christmas Meditation & Communion led by Heather Brown
Tue 7 <sup>th</sup> Jan	2.30pm	Members' Afternoon – please bring poems, humorous items etc. to read

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

Meeting fee £2.00 – first time free

Annual subscription – £3.00

Members of the Tuesday Fellowship would like to wish readers of the Hadleigh Messenger a happy Christmas and a healthy New Year.

Please join us in the New Year if you are able!

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### Christmas Celebration – Sun 22<sup>nd</sup> Dec @ 4.00pm

We are again holding one main Christmas event this year – our Christmas Celebration. The event starts with a Celebration Tea at 4.00pm in the Small Hall which is followed by a service at 5.00pm. (Note that these times have been brought forward from last year.) The service will be led by one of our Interim Moderators, Rev. Jim Tarrant.

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.

### New Year's Eve Social – Tue 31<sup>st</sup> Dec @ 6.30pm

It is planned to hold a New Year's Eve Social again this year. 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. I look forward to seeing you there!

*Royston Brackin*



### New Year quotes

- “Be at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbours, and let every new year find you a better man.” – *Benjamin Franklin*
- “Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow.” – *Albert Einstein*
- “There are far better things ahead than any we leave behind.” - *C.S. Lewis*

# WHAT'S ON

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

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Sun 8 Dec 2019	- Mayor's Christmas Carols with SA Band Youngsters and representatives from the local community at the SA Hadleigh Temple. Starts at 6.00pm. Free admission. Collection for Cancer Research.
Fri 13 Dec 2019	- Castle Point Mayor's Charities Christmas Fundraising Event in the Atrium, CPBC Offices, Kiln Road from 11.30am to 2.00pm. With Christmas wreaths, plants, cakes, songs, refreshments & raffle.
ditto	- Christmas Songs & Carol Concert with John Kennett & Friends at St Michael's Church, Daws Heath, starting at 7.30pm. Tickets £5.00 - to book, phone John on 07800 735908. Proceeds to Fair Havens Hospice.
Sat 14 Dec 2019	- Coffee Morning at Hadleigh Methodist Church - 10.00am to 12 noon.
ditto	- Local Councillors' Surgery at Old Fire Station - 10.00am to 12 noon.
ditto	- Community Mince Pie Coffee Morning at Thundersley Methodist Church, Kennington Avenue, Thundersley from 10.00am to 12 noon.
	Beat & Beans Café with Lynda Jiggins at St James the Less Church from 10.30am to 12.30pm. Live music with coffee, tea and snacks. Relax and enjoy the music in historic surroundings. Free admission.
ditto	- A Christmas Concert featuring Hadleigh Voices Community Choir, Friendly Folk plus Soloists at St George's Church, Rushbottom Lane, New Thundersley. Starts at 7.30pm. Tickets £5.00 at the door.
ditto	- Gaudeamus present 'Rejoice!' ~ A Selection Of Joyful Christmas Music at Wesley Methodist Church, Elm Road, Leigh-on-Sea. Starts at 7.45pm. Tickets £10.00. To book, phone 01268 773336.
Sun 15 Dec 2019	- Allegro Present An Evening Of Christmas Music at Benfleet Methodist Church, 67 High Road, South Benfleet. Starts at 6.30pm. Tickets £10.00, children free - to book, phone 01268 751303.
Wed 18 Dec 2019	- Kingsway Community Cinema Presents 'Rocketman' (exploring Elton John's early years) at Hadleigh Old Fire Station. Doors open 6.30pm for 7.00pm start. Tickets £5.00 in advance via Eventbrite or pay at the door if seats available.
Sat 21 Dec 2020	- Carols at Costa Coffee all afternoon with friends from Baptist Church.
Wed 8 Jan 2020	- Hub Café Knitting Group Meeting at The Hub Café, Hadleigh Park, Chapel Lane, from 1.15pm to 2.45pm. Held every Wednesday. No materials or experience required. Café hot drinks £1.00 for the group.
Sat 11 Jan 2020	- Coffee Morning at Hadleigh Methodist Church - 10.00am to 12 noon.
ditto	- Local Councillors' Surgery at Old Fire Station - 10.00am to 12 noon.
ditto	- Hadleigh & Thundersley Community Archive Drop-in in Hadleigh Library from 10.30am to 12 noon. Bring your old photos and other memorabilia or view articles on the Archive website
ditto	- Beat & Beans Café at St James the Less Church from 10.30am to 12.30pm. Live music with coffee, tea and snacks. Relax and enjoy the music in historic surroundings. Free admission.
Tue 28 Jan 2020	- 'The Kettle's On' Coffee Morning at St Barnabas Church from 10.30am to 12.00 noon. Held every Tuesday.

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



## Letter from Adrian

Dear friends,

Happy Christmas! In the middle of November as I sit down to write this letter it still seems a long time away and yet in a week or so we will be starting the wonderful round of Christmas services. Time passes swiftly especially as the hair begins to turn grey and your teeth drop out, or at least that's my experience.

But seriously, things that seem a long time in the future quite often creep up on us unawares and suddenly instead of sometime in the future it's next week. To a certain extent this could occur with the Church's Christmas. If Christmas is to be a blessing to us and the people in our area, then we need to be thinking about it in a really practical way.

The question I would like us to consider is where the people come from who attend our Christmas services and hopefully meet with Christ at these events? Yes, there are a number who see the adverts and decide to attend without contact with anybody prior to the meeting. There was a time when this happened reasonably frequently, however nowadays very few people fall into this category. By and large people who come to Christmas services have been taken by friends.

Personal invitations from people you know, and trust are more likely to meet with a positive response than simply an advert in the local paper or even an invitation posted through a letter box. Don't get me wrong I am not saying don't do this type of outreach because the Holy Spirit can use all these methods to open people's eyes, ears, minds and hearts. I am however suggesting that personal invitations are targeted and can be much more effective.

The question I would like to leave with you is who can I encourage to come with me to the services over Christmas. Also don't rely upon them braving the church door on their own try and arrange for them to come with you, so that you can settle them in a seat, and they can be guided through the service. It's important that they feel comfortable and accepted, so that the Holy Spirit can use the opportunity to speak to them and reveal the way to salvation.

In today's world where so many people seem to have been inoculated against the message of Christ and the way of salvation, it is important that we do everything we can to get over the obstacles and get the barriers to come down.

To conclude however the whole thing starts and ends with prayer. Ask God who you should invite and then pray for them that they become willing to surrender to the Lord. After the service be sensitive to their moods, they may just want to think about what they have heard. They may have questions they want to ask. They may want you to break the ice. Try to listen for God's prompting so that you can be guided by the Holy Spirit to respond to their needs.

Carole and I trust that you will have a really happy Christmas and that the Lord will bless you over this time. As we look to the New Year, we pray that through the churches mission we will all be drawn closer to the Lord and that many of our friends will come to know Him as a result of our prayers.

Yours in Him,

*Adrian*

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## Bible Study



The first session of our new Bible Study led by our Adrian took place on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November and there was a very encouraging attendance as evidenced by the photo.

The second session will take place on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December at 12.30pm. The title of the session is 'I do believe the Angel' and we will look at Luke 1:26-38. Do come along if you are able and if you'd like to join us for lunch immediately after the coffee morning then bring a packed lunch with you.

*Malcolm Brown*

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## Family News

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### Ron Mallison

Ron's death on 1<sup>st</sup> November was reported in last month's magazine. His funeral took place on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> November at Pitsea Crematorium and a wake was held at the home of his daughter Gillian. An obituary appears elsewhere in the magazine.

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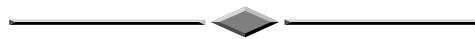
## A Christmas prayer

Lord, in a season when every heart should be happy and light, many of us are struggling with the heaviness of life – burdens that steal the joy right out of our Christmas stockings. Crazy weather disasters strike at unsuspecting areas, ravaging peaceful homes and interrupting the lives of unsuspecting residents. Tragedy arrives as innocent victims suffer, and an inner voice whispers, "Be afraid!" We need your peace, Jesus.

Lord, we still carol the wonderful message, huddled beneath winter caps on snow-covered porches, or from churches, led by enthusiastic musicians or choir members. Yet we confess that our hearts are too often filled with wonder of a different kind: wondering when the bills will be paid, when the terror will stop, when rest will come. Will it ever? Is the message still true?

In a world where worry, not peace, prevails, stir up that good news again. This Christmas, make it real in our hearts. Never have we needed Your joy and peace more than now. Thank You for the gift of Jesus, our Immanuel, the Word made flesh. Forgive us for forgetting – that Your love never changes, never fades, and that You never abandon the purpose for which You came: to save us from our sinful condition, and to give us life eternal, the joy of relationship with a holy God. Your birth – and Your death – sealed Your promise to us forever.

*Amen*



# Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2020

**Theme for 2020** –The materials for the 2020 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity have been prepared by the Christian churches in Malta and Gozo. On 10<sup>th</sup> February many Christians in Malta celebrate the Feast of the Shipwreck of St Paul, marking and giving thanks for the arrival of Christian faith on these islands. The reading from the Acts of the Apostles used for the feast is the text chosen for this year's Week of Prayer.

The story begins with Paul being taken to Rome as a prisoner (Acts 27:1). Paul is in chains, but even in what turns out to be a perilous journey, the mission of God continues through him. The passengers on the boat are at the mercy of the forces of the seas beneath them. These forces take them into unknown territory, where they are lost and without hope.

The 276 people on board the ship are divided into distinct groups. The centurion and his soldiers have power and authority but are dependent on the skill and experience of the sailors. Although all are afraid and vulnerable, the prisoners in chains are the most vulnerable of all. Their lives are expendable; they are at risk of summary execution (27:42). As the story unfolds, under pressure and in fear for their lives, we see distrust and suspicion widening the divisions between the different groups.

Remarkably, however, Paul stands out as a centre of peace in the turmoil. He knows that his life is not governed by forces indifferent to his fate, but rather is held in the hands of the God to whom he belongs and whom he worships (27:23). Because of this faith, he is confident that he will stand before the emperor in Rome, and in the strength of this faith he can stand before his fellow travellers and give thanks to God. All are encouraged. Following Paul's example, they share bread together, united in a new hope and trusting in his words.

This illustrates a major theme in the passage: divine providence. It had been the centurion's decision to set sail in bad weather, and throughout the storm the sailors made decisions about how to handle the ship. But in the end their own plans are thwarted, and only by staying together and allowing the ship to be wrecked do they come to be saved through divine providence. The ship and its entire valuable cargo will be lost, but all lives will be saved, "for none of you will lose a hair from your heads" (27: 34; see Luke 21:18). In our

search for Christian unity, surrendering ourselves to divine providence will demand letting go of many things to which we are deeply attached. What matters to God is the salvation of all people.

This diverse and conflicted group of people runs aground "on some island" (27:26). Having been thrown together in the same boat, they arrive at the same destination, where their human unity is disclosed in the hospitality they receive from the islanders. As they gather round the fire, surrounded by a people who neither know nor understand them, differences of power and status fall away. The 276 are no longer at the mercy of indifferent forces, but embraced by God's loving providence made present through a people who show them "unusual kindness" (28:2). Cold and wet, they can warm and dry themselves by the fire. Hungry, they are given food. They are sheltered until it is safe for them to continue their journey.

Today many people are facing the same terrors on the same seas. The very same places named in the reading (27:1, 28:1) also feature in the stories of modern-day migrants. In other parts of the world many others are making equally dangerous journeys by land and sea to escape natural disasters, warfare and poverty. Their lives, too, are at the mercy of immense and coldly indifferent forces – not only natural, but political, economic and human. This human indifference takes various forms: the indifference of those who sell places on unseaworthy vessels to desperate people; the indifference of the decision not to send out rescue boats; and the indifference of turning migrant ships away.

Hospitality is a much needed virtue in our search for Christian unity. It is a practice that calls us to a greater generosity to those in need. The people who showed unusual kindness to Paul and his companions did not yet know Christ, and yet it is through their unusual kindness that a divided people were drawn closer together. Our own Christian unity will be discovered not only through showing hospitality to one another, important though this is, but also through loving encounters with those who do not share our language, culture or faith.

**Local observance** – For details of meetings in Hadleigh, please see the page for the January preaching arrangements. Resources for the Week of Prayer are downloadable from the CTBI website at <http://www.ctbi.org.uk>.

## URC News

### West Kirby URC's prayers for the community

When West Kirby URC began their 'Say One for Me' prayer project a year ago, they hoped it would connect with their community. It did more than that.



The Rev. Louise Franklin, Minister of West Kirby URC, explained how it all came about.

"We'd been generically praying for our community for a while but wanted something more intentional. We noticed that St Mary's Church Upton were doing Say One for Me and, with their part partnership, started it here.

"Postcards inviting prayer requests go into local shops and amenities, are given to church members for sparking conversations and are in our churches and sited outside the two entrances. There are several responses each week and a coordinator gathers them and a small group prays for them.

"Last Christmas we were handing out gifts and also inviting shop workers and the business community to a 'carols around a tree' service. A shop worker ran out after us asking if we were the 'praying church'. A conversation ensued, and she gave us items for prayer and accepted an invitation to the service – which she came to, along with her husband. This lady has since been coming to church regularly, now volunteers with our toddler team and is considering church membership. In a text sent recently, she said: 'Coming to church has changed my life!'

"Say One for Me has been a simple proactive way to connect with our communities to find out what's on people's hearts and minds and to connect their concerns to a God who answers prayer."

Along with this initiative, West Kirby URC have begun a new Sunday afternoon service aimed at families, which attracted 54 people including children recently.

"It's aimed at families who don't come to any other Sunday service, and those who want a more family focused time in church," Louise continued.

"We also have a monthly midweek service called 'Coffee, Cake and Communion', which is attended by older folk, and for many this is their

only expression of church attendance. One gentleman used to go to church but hadn't been for 50 years – he found a place of welcome here. It's good to remember there's always a way back to meet Jesus! That group is also starting a midweek fellowship group focusing on discipleship, prayer and Bible study."

### Cambridge awards former Moderator with Doctor of Divinity

The University of Cambridge has awarded the degree of Doctor of Divinity to the Rev. Professor



David Thompson, a former Moderator of the URC General Assembly. This degree is a higher doctorate, awarded by universities to a

religious academic for accomplishments reaching well beyond the doctorate level.

David has spent his whole career in Cambridge, and is now Emeritus Professor of Modern Church History at the University and a Life Fellow of Fitzwilliam College. He specialises in the history of the European churches over the last two hundred years, in Christian missions and world Christianity since 1850, and in ecumenism, church-state relations and Christian social thought.

Beyond his academic duties David has served the URC in many capacities, convening (at different times) the group that produced Rejoice and Sing, the United Reformed Church Trust, the board of governors at Westminster College and our Law and Polity Advisory Group. He currently serves as President and council member of the URC History Society. He has had a high national and international profile over some decades as an ecumenist, helping Christians to understand one another's different traditions and to grow in mutual respect and love. Yet he has been equally at home and equally committed in encouraging and supporting the life of some of our smaller rural congregations.

The Rev. John Proctor, General Secretary of the URC said: "This is excellent news and a fine way for the University to affirm a scholarly and teaching career of enormous achievement. David has also found time to fulfil a host of important tasks in the Church, both in the URC and in many wider settings, and we are very grateful for all that he has contributed."

## URC wins gold A Rocha eco award

A United Reformed Church (URC) has been recognised for its commitment towards caring for the environment by becoming the first URC to win an A Rocha Gold Eco Church award.



St John's Marsh Green, Edenbridge, impressed judges on a site visit in October because they were inspired by the congregation's teamwork.

The church generates its own electricity, uses rainwater for toilet

flushing, has its own nature reserve with a wildflower meadow to improve habitats for wildlife, runs eco-events and encourages children and adults to be as 'green' as possible.

"One of St John's' strongest motivations for its eco activities is its children," explained Gill Musgrove, Coordinator of the St John's Marsh Green Eco Group.

"Every time we baptise a new baby we are reminded of the state of the planet on which they and children the world over must live."

In an email after her visit to the church, Helen Stephens, A Rocha's Church Relations Manager, commented that she had received a 'strong impression of an engaged community.'

"I came away really feeling that everything [that the congregation does] is 'church' - tanks and gutters, meadows and hens, energy, liturgy and social action," she said.

The Revd Rob Weston, URC Environmental Task Group Convenor and Minister for Tavistock United Reformed Church, said: "I'm delighted to see the first Gold Eco Church award within the URC, it is quite clear that the whole Church across the UK is waking up to the need for urgent action."

The Eco Church scheme gives churches the opportunity to complete a unique online eco survey about how they are caring for God's earth in different areas of their life and work.

Points are awarded for the answers a church gives, which then go towards an Eco Church Award. The more a church does, the more points it gets.

The survey covers five key areas of church life: worship and teaching, management of church

buildings, management of church land, community and global engagement, and lifestyle.

Rob, who also serves as interim Minister for Lavington United Reformed Church, Bideford, encouraged all URCs to sign up to the scheme.

"The scheme is suitable for large and small churches, urban and rural. Climate change is an issue for us all and every church can make a positive change. As Convenor of the URC's Environmental Task Group, I believe the Eco Church award scheme offers such a great range of resources and advice that every local URC should be signed up and involved in making a difference."

## Faith protestors celebrate after government U-turn on fracking

Christians who have long campaigned for a halt to fracking in Lancashire have called the government's U-turn on shale gas extraction a "community win".

On 2<sup>nd</sup> November, the government announced fracking would not be allowed in England after a report by the Oil and Gas Authority (OGA) said it was not possible to predict the probability or size of tremors caused by the practice.

Fracking firm Cuadrilla operates the UK's first horizontal shale gas exploration wells in Preston New Road, Blackpool, where dozens of tremors have been recorded since it began pumping high volumes of water underground in October 2018 to look for gas.



Daleen Ten Cate, Missional Discipleship Mentor for the United Reformed Church North

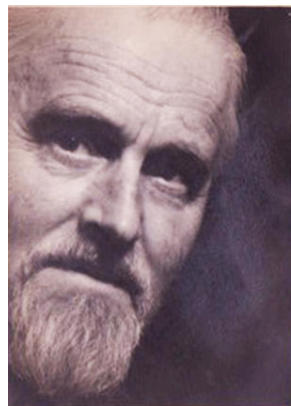
West Synod, who with a team of others form part of the Preston New Road Action Group, said: "This moratorium is a community win – a huge win – against all the odds, against the world's biggest corporate lobbying sector, the multi-trillion pound fossil fuel industry and its government backers. Let's just hope the prime minister didn't just use this decision to gain votes in the next election."

The action group also fears the moratorium is just a temporary measure after Andrea Leadsom, the Business Secretary, said shale gas extraction may be put on hold until it is proved safe.

## Len Doust – A Hadleigh Artist and Author

Following the publication of the November magazine containing Len Doust's own story about how he came to be awarded the Military Medal in WW1, I realised that Val Jackson had also published his full life story on the Community Archive website, with help from Len's son, Tim. That article appears below followed by some memories of Len kindly penned by Ron Hurrell, in response to my appeal to anyone who may have known him.

Leonard Arthur Doust was born in Wood Green on 20<sup>th</sup> September 1897



and in 1910 the family moved to Southend (on the advice of Dr Allinson – of Allinson's bakery fame) as being a healthier place to live.

His father Frank set up a grocer's shop on the London Road at the top of Hamlet Court Road. Len

and his brother Reg both worked in the shop as errand boys. He went to the Art School in Southend. By 1916 they were both in the Army; Len was a driver with the Royal Field Artillery and in 1917 was awarded the Military Medal for taking ammunition up the line under fire.

He left the army as soon as he could in 1920 and then with a friend, Bill Savory, set up a small publishing business for his art books, which he sold in Woolworths for 6d. These were then taken over by Warnes who became his principal publishers for the rest of his life. He was a good dancer and good tennis player and also played the piano in those days. He was a member of the Methodist Church in Westcliff.

He married Megan, the niece of Bill Savory, in 1930 and had two children, Pauline born in 1931 and Timothy born in 1934. [Pauline died in 2016 and her funeral was held in our church, as she had attended Sunday School here.]

At this period he lived either on royalties from his books or from various advertising ventures. He also invented games – one was a version of 3-handed bridge. The very small paper-back books of the 1920s had now been replaced by the definitive edition of his works in a series of hardback books on a wide variety of subjects related to 'How to paint...'

At the end of the 1930s the family moved to Henley Crescent near the top end of Hopleythick Lane and when bombs started dropping, the family evacuated themselves to Megan's sister in Derbyshire. As sales of art books had stopped, Len got a job as a teacher in a secondary school in Derby. He hated being, as he called it, "up

north" and was very glad in 1942 to get back down south and the family settled in Beresford Gardens in Hadleigh as they were not allowed to move back into the town. At first, after the end of the war, he continued to teach at a school in Nevendon Craylands (now part of Basildon).

Len stopped teaching as soon as he could. By this time his marriage had broken up and he lived with his son and daughter. His next work was in connection with a man called Fellowes-Farrow who was developing a series of religious film strips – Life of Jesus, Life of Paul etc. This provided Len with a very welcome added income. They actually managed a new carpet at the time! At the same time Warnes produced the third edition of his books in a more modern style.

Remarkably, the paintings on which these film strips were based were found in a dustbin by somebody when Fellowes-Farrow died and eventually turned into a DVD called *Glory Story* by a Mr John Affleck.

Eventually Warnes stopped publishing the books and Len retired. By 1957 Pauline and Tim had both left home (Tim to spend the next 15 years teaching in West Africa). Len lived on his own and Megan and her new husband both visited regularly and supported him in many ways.

He then moved to Church Road in Hadleigh [virtually opposite our church] in 1959. He carried on painting. He had always been a most religious man and was a regular attender at the Hadleigh Methodist Church and ran a bible study in his flat for young people. Many of them would write and some went to his funeral in Gosport. He was also a good friend of Alan Sorrell – the painter who lived in the old Peculiar People's Chapel in Daws Heath.

When Tim and his wife were back in the UK, they would normally have Len down to stay in Gosport several times a year. He had a delightful habit of making his own birthday cards to send to his children and grandchildren. Tim has a large collection of them as well as several picture story books he wrote for his grandchildren.

Len never had much money. He loved going into the bank in Hadleigh and asking in a loud voice how much money they owed him. It was always only a few pounds. He had been approached once to do programmes on the TV but had not pursued the offer. He detested the Television. He was a man of strong views on almost any subject and loved nothing more than a good argument about religion, art, politics etc. He was a man deeply affected by the horrors of the First World War and yet someone who could talk as he did in his books with delicacy and sheer enjoyment of the thrill of painting.

He was knocked down by a car in Church Road in February 1986 not far from his house. After a stay in Southend Hospital it was decided by the family that he should move to be near them in Gosport. By then, his sight had largely gone and he died with his children and grandchildren by

his bedside in May 1989. His grave is on the west boundary of St James the Less churchyard.



Len Doust's headstone

After his death it was found that he had given all of his books and many of his paintings away.

*Val Jackson*

Originally published 10<sup>th</sup> May 2015

## My friend Len

At the editor's suggestion, a few words further to the piece on Len Doust in the November *Messenger*...

I first met Len at Hadleigh Methodist Church, although, as he said to me, "I don't need to come to Church; I only come to sing the hymns of Charles Wesley." Nobody sat next to Len until I chose to do so. He had what, when I was a boy, might have been called 'Religious mania'. Although he could converse on any topic, the conversation always came around to the 'Saving Grace of God', the awful level to which mankind has sunk and the glories of the life to come (to which he looked forward confidently). Len taught me how to listen to a sermon critically and sort out the wheat from the tares. He would not hesitate to take a preacher to task if what he had preached did not stand up to sound theology.

In answer to the question, "How are you?", the invariable reply was, "Do you mean 'How am I?' or 'How is it?'" To him the Trinity was no mystery; "We are all trinities." he would argue, "Body, Mind and Spirit," and that was the Holy Trinity: God the Mind, Jesus the Body and the Holy Spirit.

Len was always present on Sundays except when the pulpit was occupied by a lady. Ironically his funeral service was conducted by a lady minister. I was surprised Len turned up!

I used to call on him about once a month. I would knock with seven taps on the knocker and he would greet me with the phrase, "Come on in, there's only the two of us here." To Len, the reality of Jesus was so profound that one chair was reserved exclusively for him.

Len had a prayer list of over a hundred names, which he could recite 'by heart'. It included me, Maureen and all my children. His parting words to me were always, "You'll all be there; you're all in my prayers." I found those words uncommonly comforting.

Len's Bible, which I have, is a sight to behold, almost every page is peppered with notes and cross references written in his characteristic scrawl which, sadly I am unable to decipher. His knowledge of scripture would have confounded the keenest Jehovah's Witness and he would insist no quotation was valid unless accompanied by 'Chapter and verse'.

His 'religious mania' notwithstanding, Len had his earthly passions. He was, in his time, keen on dancing, tennis, card playing and he was a consummate artist.

Perhaps Len's most universal legacy was his three-letter prayer: T. o. L. It stands for "Take over Lord." It expresses in a simple but at the same time profound way, the sentiment of "Thy kingdom come". To this he would sometimes add, "at whatever cost."

*Ron Hurrell*

## ‘Mary’s manifesto for an Advent election’

Rev. Nigel Uden writes...



**Statue of Blessed Virgin Mary (2000) by David Wynne (1926-2014) in the Lady Chapel of Ely Cathedral**

A general election in Advent is unusual. There has not been one since 1923. On the surface of it, that is a minor detail. But actually, despite the alleged inconvenience of a campaign in the run-up to Christmas, to allow some of the Advent themes to shape our pre-election thinking might be helpful.

All my life I have been singing Mary’s song, Magnificat, according to its first word in Latin. In a process of spiritual osmosis, it has permeated my thinking. Every time I visit our local cathedral in Ely, I am struck by the statue of Mary – I see a woman at once exultant and yet so very thoughtful. And such are the words St Luke records as Mary’s response to the news that she is to be the mother of Jesus. It occurs to me that, although Magnificat is part of Anglican Evening Prayer every day of the year, it adds a particular value in our Advent worship. The version that got into Rejoice and Sing is Bishop Timothy Dudley-Smith’s Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord. It’s number 740 and I imagine it will have an airing in many of our congregations’ December services.

The evangelist’s record suggests that Mary is especially alert to some of the elements of God’s reign that Jesus will inaugurate. Like the prophets before her, these themes offer a critique of the way society was ordered in her day. We, too, might find in them pointing to necessary hallmarks for the ordering of our own nations today. Five points leapt out at me as I pondered it.

First, there is the immense significance of the place that is given to a woman in God’s scheme for making all things whole. Mary is pivotal. How have we allowed society to evolve so that women still do not receive pay equal to men, often for doing the same work?

Secondly, Magnificat speaks of how proud people are ‘scattered’; ‘proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight’ is Dudley-Smith’s paraphrase. Does Mary challenge the way we had allowed our political discourse to develop in those months before the end of the last parliament?

Thirdly, we hear of the lowly being exalted – might this urge us to ensure the renewal of dignity for people so easily marginalised because of the their identity and situation: their abilities, their body, their poverty, their race, their sexuality?

Fourthly, Mary dreams of the hungry being filled. In the age of foodbanks here is an Advent vision of their redundancy.

And lastly, Magnificat emphasises how the God who reigns does so in mercy – mercy which responds to need and flaw and error with an unexpected, unmerited, unconditional love, and bids us do likewise. Is it not this mercy that sustains us as people of hope? As Bishop Timothy helps us sing ‘firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.’

I find these to be eloquent guides as I explore the manifestos and key ideas with which we are faced. Determined to exercise my franchise, but somewhat confused by some of the political ideas before me, I am in fact grateful that this election can be infused with Mary’s themes for Advent.

*Nigel Uden*

Posted 29 November 2019



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## Computer Corner

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### One Man's Mission

**Interesting article**

I would have liked to be able to incorporate this article in the magazine but I'm not sure if the BBC would have given permission and it is rather long. It is one of the so-called 'Long Reads' on the BBC News site and features Rev. Robert Stivey who has spent roughly £200,000 of his own money to buy 12 chapels around South Wales in the hope of re-opening them.

URL: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/extra/Vowy7nKBPo/welsh-chapels-one-mans-mission>

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### 30 Days Timelapse at Sea

**Interesting video**

A fascinating video composed of about 80,000 timelapse photos taken onboard a ship travelling from the Red Sea via Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean, Colombo, Malacca Strait, Singapore and the South East China Sea to Hong Kong

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AHrCI9eSJGQ> or go to youtube.com and search for "30 Days Timelapse at Sea"

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### 1001 Free Fonts

**Interesting website**

There are lots of sites offering free fonts but I have used this one recently. The website name is a misnomer as the site has in the region of 10,000 fonts. All of them are handily organised across 64 categories, along with the option to browse by designer.

URL: <https://www.1001freefonts.com>

For help with managing fonts in Windows 10 visit the following website:

<https://www.digitaltrends.com/computing/how-to-install-fonts-in-windows-10>

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## Word Search – Thundersley road names

Inspired by the recent launch of the Community Archive's *Thundersley Postcard Memories* book...

Y	W	N	A	S	D	Y	G	D	L	E	I	F	R	E	T	S	E	H	C	BRAMBLE
U	L	J	G	R	J	O	D	F	N	O	L	U	G	H	Y	B	C	W	M	BURCHES
I	T	R	A	H	P	T	T	O	L	L	G	A	T	E	V	R	M	E	R	CEDAR
R	A	B	R	K	D	Q	Q	Y	B	K	E	A	E	S	N	A	J	N	S	CHASE
W	O	F	U	L	A	A	S	I	I	D	Y	U	U	R	H	M	K	S	N	CHESTERFIELD
W	C	W	E	R	U	W	W	L	I	F	A	M	E	W	Y	B	O	L	W	COMMON
Y	C	H	G	V	C	D	N	S	U	B	P	T	V	C	H	L	D	E	D	FAIRMEAD
B	B	B	X	I	M	H	D	K	L	D	S	I	P	G	F	E	R	Y	L	HART
U	R	O	N	A	M	O	E	M	G	E	A	Y	I	E	M	F	O	H	R	KENNETH
R	T	L	D	W	O	G	F	S	W	L	B	E	H	T	E	J	F	V	U	KESWICK
N	C	S	H	W	M	D	Q	C	K	W	N	W	M	C	L	F	G	G	S	KILN
X	K	L	O	R	W	R	N	D	R	W	Z	E	E	R	T	J	N	N	H	LANGFORD
O	C	L	F	V	Y	J	M	A	T	U	I	N	Q	K	I	Z	A	V	B	MANOR
R	I	X	C	O	M	M	O	N	G	F	N	O	D	X	C	A	L	G	O	RUNNYMEDE
U	W	C	L	Y	V	U	M	J	F	S	F	N	E	B	R	E	F	V	T	RUSHBOTTOM
A	S	S	M	K	R	H	B	P	O	H	D	S	Y	F	G	Z	Z	I	T	TOLLGATE
K	E	Y	D	F	K	C	H	A	S	E	N	L	C	M	T	P	E	L	O	WENSLEY
U	K	A	L	R	A	D	E	C	M	M	W	E	U	Y	E	T	J	F	M	WESTERN
W	B	L	C	B	K	L	M	I	P	R	T	D	D	W	W	D	T	B	I	WOODSIDE
N	B	U	Z	O	Q	D	I	P	X	H	T	E	N	N	E	K	E	R	V	WYBURN

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

# CHURCH DIARY FOR JANUARY 2020

DAY	TIME	EVENT
Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup>	10.30am - 12 noon	Coffee Morning
Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am 6.30pm	Morning Service – Mrs Machrina Ejaz Evening Service with Holy Communion – Mr Jim Clubb
Monday 6 <sup>th</sup>	8.00pm - 10.00pm	Ladies Recreation Group
Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup>	2.30pm	Tuesday Fellowship – Members’ Afternoon
Thursday 9 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am - 12 noon 12.30pm	Coffee Morning Bible Study led by Adrian Tinning (with packed lunch)
Sunday 12 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Morning Service – Mr Jim Clubb
Monday 13 <sup>th</sup>	8.00pm - 10.00pm	Ladies Recreation Group
Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup>	6.00pm	ELDERS’ MEETING (one week later than usual)
Thursday 16 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am - 12 noon	Coffee Morning with bric-a-brac table for Christian Aid
Sunday 19 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Morning Service with Holy Communion – Rev. Dr Jim Tarrant
Monday 20 <sup>th</sup>	8.00pm - 10.00pm	Ladies Recreation Group
Thursday 23 <sup>rd</sup>	10.30am - 12 noon 12.30pm	Coffee Morning CHURCH MEETING (one week later than usual)
Sunday 26 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Morning Service – Mrs Janette Stevens
Monday 27 <sup>th</sup>	8.00pm - 10.00pm	Ladies Recreation Group
Thursday 30 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am - 12 noon	Coffee Morning

## The Year

What can be said in New Year rhymes,  
That’s not been said a thousand times?  
The new years come, the old years go,  
We know we dream, we dream we know.  
We rise up laughing with the light,  
We lie down weeping with the night.  
We hug the world until it stings,  
We curse it then and sigh for wings.  
We live, we love, we woo, we wed,  
We wreath our brides, we sheet our dead.  
We laugh, we weep, we hope, we fear,  
And that’s the burden of the year.

*Ella Wheeler Wilcox (1850 – 1919)*

Ella Wheeler Wilcox was born in November 1850 in Johnstown, Wisconsin. She was the youngest of four children. She had her first poem published around the age of fourteen in the New York Mercury. All of her early work (she began writing poetry at the age of eight) from those years has been lost. From 1867-68 she attended the University of Wisconsin. Her first book, *Drops of Water* appeared four years later. In 1884, she married business man, Robert M. Wilcox. One of her most famous poems is *Solitude*, which starts with the lines: ‘Laugh and the world laughs with you, Weep and you weep alone’. Wilcox’s husband died in 1916 and she spent the remaining years of her life touring Allied camps in France, lecturing and reading her poetry. She died in October 1919.

## CHURCH DIARY FOR DECEMBER 2019

DAY	TIME	EVENT
Saturday 30 <sup>th</sup>	8.30am	Men's Breakfast Meeting
Sunday 1 <sup>st</sup>	10.30am 6.30pm	Gift Service - Rev. Celia Whitman Evening Service with Holy Communion - Mr Jim Clubb
Monday 2 <sup>nd</sup>	8.00pm - 10.00pm	Ladies Recreation Group
Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am - 12 noon	Coffee Morning
Sunday 8 <sup>h</sup>	10.30am	Morning Service - Major Alan Bennett
Monday 9 <sup>th</sup>	8.00pm - 10.00pm	Ladies Recreation Group
Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup>	2.30pm	Tuesday Fellowship - Christmas Meditation & Communion led by Mrs Heather Brown
Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup>	6.00pm	ELDERS' MEETING
Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am - 12 noon	Coffee Morning
Sunday 15 <sup>h</sup>	10.30am	Morning Service with Holy Communion - Mr Adrian Tinning
Monday 16 <sup>th</sup>	8.00pm - 10.00pm	Ladies Recreation Group
Thursday 19 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am - 12 noon	Coffee Morning with bric-a-brac table for Christian Aid
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	10.30am <b>5.00pm</b>	Morning Service - Mr Adrian Tinning Christmas Celebration - Rev. Dr Jim Tarrant MA MTh
Monday 23 <sup>rd</sup>	8.00pm - 10.00pm	Ladies Recreation Group
Thursday 26 <sup>th</sup>	Cancelled - holiday	Coffee Morning - CANCELLED
Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Morning Service - Mr Wilf Tyler
Monday 30 <sup>th</sup>	8.00pm - 10.00pm	Ladies Recreation Group
Tuesday 31 <sup>st</sup>	6.30pm	New Year's Eve Social

### The Adoration of the Wise Men

Saw you never in the twilight,  
When the sun had left the skies,  
Up in heaven the clear stars shining,  
Through the gloom like silver eyes?  
So of old the wise men watching,  
Saw a little stranger star,  
And they knew the King was given,  
And they follow'd it from far.

Heard you never of the story,  
How they cross'd the desert wild,  
Journey'd on by plain and mountain,  
Till they found the Holy Child?  
How they open'd all their treasure,  
Kneeling to that Infant King,  
Gave the gold and fragrant incense,  
Gave the myrrh in offering?

Know ye not that lowly Baby  
Was the bright and morning star,  
He who came to light the Gentiles,  
And the darken'd isles afar?  
And we too may seek His cradle,  
There our heart's best treasures bring,  
Love, and Faith, and true devotion,  
For our Saviour, God, and King.

*Cecil Frances Alexander*