

# THE HADLEIGH MESSENGER

December 2020 & January 2021



When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed...

Luke 2:17-18 (NIV)

The Magazine of the  
United Reformed Church, Hadleigh, Essex

SUNDAY SERVICES - SUSPENDED

10.30am every Sunday  
with Holy Communion on 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month

6.30pm on 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday only  
with Holy Communion

# 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.

<p><b>HADLEIGH URC OFFICERS</b></p> <p><b>Interim Moderators:</b>                  Rev. Dr. Jim Tarrant MA MTh                  Rev. Celia Whitman</p> <p><b>Hon. Secretary:</b>                  Mr Royston Brackin (01702 558862)</p> <p><b>Acting Hon. Treasurer:</b>                  Mr Royston Brackin</p> <p><b>Elders: (* denotes Serving Elder)</b>                  Mr Royston Brackin*                  Mrs Heather Brown* (01702 557678)                  Mr Malcolm Brown* (01702 557678)                  Miss Jean Reeve* (01702 554907)                  Mrs Mary Milne</p> <p>Elder `emeritus': Rev. Peter Brewer</p> <p>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.</p>	<p><b>USEFUL INFORMATION</b></p> <p>Address: 1 Church Road, Hadleigh, Benfleet, SS7 2DQ                  Website: <a href="http://www.hadleighessexurc.org.uk">www.hadleighessexurc.org.uk</a>                  URC website: <a href="http://www.urc.org.uk">www.urc.org.uk</a></p> <hr/> <p><b>URC Eastern Synod Office contact info:</b></p> <p>Address: Synod Office, The United Reformed Church, Whittlesford, Cambridge, CB2 4ND                  Tel no: 01223 830770 E-mail: <a href="mailto:eastern.admin@urc.org.uk">eastern.admin@urc.org.uk</a>                  Website: <a href="http://www.urc-eastern.org.uk">www.urc-eastern.org.uk</a></p> <hr/> <p><b>An invitation...</b></p> <p>If you are not connected with a place of worship, wish to try somewhere different or are just visiting the area then you would be most welcome at any of our services. Alternatively, drop in at the weekly Thursday coffee morning which is open to all. However, please note that all church activities are currently suspended owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>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 have a prayer request then please let any church officer know. All requests for help are treated in the strictest confidence.</p>
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## A message from Rev. Dr Jim Tarrant, one of our Interim Moderators 'The Great Divide'

Dear friends,

COVID-19 has brought deep divisions in our various ways of life. When Sue and I go for our daily walk we find ourselves avoiding both people and cars. Where people will not move out of the way we have to cross the road, when possible, or step into the road to avoid contact. What is insidious about antivirus behaviour is that, as Christians, and simply as people, we naturally go towards others and relate to them. We do this in church, of course, and in groups and meetings but we also help strangers and talk to those we do not know. We are not naturally dividers but unifiers.

Divisions have arisen elsewhere in terms of people who have been unfortunate enough to contract COVID-19 and enter hospital, being divided from their loved ones and friends. Some have suffered the desperate pain of dying without contact with family members and the comfort of home surroundings. Many have been isolated in flats and homes unable to go out. Students have been virtually imprisoned in their residences, having left home, some for the first time to sample the world of higher education only to find themselves in a very different situation from that which they had anticipated. We have also been divided from public worship, groups and meetings, to which we normally go and from which we enjoy the benefit of company and friendship.

In his situation of exile, the author of Revelation points to the sea as the great divide, unsurprisingly since he was banished to an island. Yet, in his vision of a new earth and a new heaven, he refers to the fact that there was no more sea (Rev 21.1). The great divide for him had passed as the sea passed. For others, the great divide has been there in the pain of bereavement. No matter how much we believe in survival and hold to the Christian hope, nothing can ever stop the pain of missing a dear family member. We grieve because we love and where our grief is great so also is our love.

We believe that Christ goes to the suffering and that is where our prayers should go. No doubt

you pray for those who mourn and rightly so but let us think also of praying for those who are extremely ill in hospitals and hospices. You will be doing that but I want to suggest a particular way of directing your prayer. You have perhaps held the hand of someone who is desperately ill but of course in the present situation that has not been possible where the virus is the cause of the problem. However, I want to suggest a way of framing your prayer for those in hospital missing family and home, despite the commendable efforts of staff, with only hospital walls to look at and the uncomfortable sensation of tubes as company.

Will you in your prayer stretch out your hand and focus on an unnamed sick person somewhere in hospital and ask in prayer to take their hand and hold it? You will not know the benefit you bring but someone somewhere will feel the presence of Christ which will produce for them inner peace in a distressing situation. Be a bearer of Christ to someone in need and know that in that way you have helped a sufferer.

We will before long close the divide of being without public worship in our church but we need to acknowledge that this virus has left terrible scars on people and on our wider society. There is a need to rebuild not only in our own fellowship but also in the wider society. The church is there to offer Christ to those in need just as he did in his Galilean ministry. We must go forward with a greater emphasis on the wounded, the needy and the lonely. In their situations we would be fragile and vulnerable but we would also have the notion of the risen Christ among us and around us.

Reach out in prayer for that unknown person as Christ reaches out to you and the peace of the Lord be always with you.

Your friend and interim moderator,

*Jim*

Rev. Dr James Tarrant - Joint Interim Moderator of Hadleigh URC with Rev. Celia Whitman

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### From the Bible

“Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.”

**Galatians 6:2 (NIV)**

## From the Editor

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

2020 will be a year to forget for most people except for those who have lost loved ones, especially as a result of COVID-19 infection. I am fortunate to have known only one person who has died from it.

I apologise for the magazine being late on occasions – including this month! I am constantly juggling with a variety of tasks (often local history related) and the lack of a need to publish lists of preachers, stewards' rotas etc. in time for the forthcoming month has resulted in me not always working on the magazine when I should. Vera Knapton has kindly thanked me for my efforts (see below) but I do feel a bit of a cheat having included so many items from the Internet.

Although not venturing out often at present, I did attend three funerals in November. The first one was that of Gladys Price, a former member of our Wives' Fellowship, which I attended with Vera. I was also kindly permitted to be present at the funeral of David Blackwood, the father of the much-missed Gwen Smallbone. David's funeral took place at the very old but very small St Mary's Church at Hawkwell. The size of the church meant that numbers were restricted to twenty. It was good to see members of Gwen's family again including her sister Linda.

The third funeral that I attended was that of our own Enid Rundle, who passed away just after I

had printed the November magazine. Although it did not come as a shock, and although she was 99 years old, I always feel that any death diminishes the world.

Let us hope that with various vaccines now being rolled out, life will return to some semblance of normality by Easter. I'm sure that it will not be plain sailing. The scientists do not yet know how long the immunity given by the vaccines will last or whether people who have been vaccinated can still infect others.

For people like our son Michael, who take immuno-suppressant drugs, the level of immunity obtained from a vaccine will be less than the normal population so we will need to carry on carefully following the rules to reduce the risk of infection. I have a feeling it will be a long time before the simple habit of greeting people by shaking hands makes a return.

In the meantime, let us be thankful that, thus far, we have stayed safe. Although we can't celebrate the birth of Christ at church in the usual way, let us each thank God in our hearts for the special gift that He gave the world.

Please continue to make the effort to keep in touch with others, especially those who live alone and those who will be spending Christmas on their own, perhaps for the first time.

May you have a peaceful Christmas and a hope-filled New Year.

*Malcolm Brown*

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## A 'thank you' message from Vera

As we approach the end of 2020, a year of stress and disappointment for so many folk and one that many of us would prefer to forget, I would like to express my sincere thanks to friends for their regular offers of practical help. Your kindness is much appreciated.

In particular, many thanks to Malcolm who has produced the *Hadleigh Messenger* every month in spite of our church's enforced closure. Malcolm has managed to sustain the magazine's contents with interesting and often thought-provoking articles. Then, having printed and assembled the pages, he has faithfully delivered many of the magazines in person whilst (when regulations allowed) spending precious time to call in and have a 'cuppa' and a chat.

Thank you also to Heather, Kay, Jean and Malcolm for undertaking several deep-cleaning and cupboard-clearing sessions within the fabric of the church building in preparation and readiness for the happy day when we will be able to worship together again.

*Vera Knapton*

# The Christmas Cracker

No party table this Christmas will be complete without a colourful cracker by the sizzling plate of turkey fare. Pulling the cracker breaks the tension between strangers and gets the children giggling with glee. It breaks down the shyness and gets you laughing and talking. It gives you a party hat and a few trinkets, and the curious motto which evokes a laugh and a groan, especially if it happens to be weird humour that falls deadly flat.

The frivolities are designed to be banal, and reflect the fact that much of what we call entertainment is superficial and silly, as the Bard Himself observed: “A tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing”. Sports, talks and walks are ways of using up the time we have for pleasures and passions that make life worth living. It’s all there in the cracker with its trivial and cheap oddments. So much of Christmas will, for many, be a beery joke, and not the search of Wise Men longing to worship a king, or as Shepherds running to be at the manger of God’s purpose for mankind.

The stars of pantomime and TV make our modern Christmas, jolly and joyful, but hide the homeless who fail to find room in a society which values luck as the game of life. Joseph and Mary were lucky to find somewhere to rest after the journey and the imminent birth of their baby Jesus. God, as the hymn puts it, “moves in mysterious way, his wonders to perform, He plants his footsteps in the sea, and rides upon the storm.” (William Cowper).

All scientists agree that mystery curtains off everything in the universe, ultimately. We all know **what** happens, but not **why** or **how**. Nature and life and the world are all miracles, and

scientists are baffled as to where it all comes from. God hasn’t designed everything, except existence itself. He has created us with the maximum amount of freedom necessary for us to be human and make choices. A football match cannot be completely designed, that would spoil the fun, and that is true of all games, and of life itself. All players hope that Lady Luck will smile upon them and give them a win – as when Southend United knocked Manchester United out of the ‘Cup’. The crowd exploded with joy as the goal was scored and never sat down again. (My son was there and shared the celebration!)

Life is fun because it is not “fixed”. Life is a virus of incredible beauty and wonder, but it can, occasionally, go wrong (cf. the COVID-19 virus). Those who produced the first cracker didn’t know, then, about the Big Bang of creation, but, the more that I think about the cracker and its contents, the more I see it as the story of life.

The Big Bang hurled stars into space, where they hang, like Christmas lights in the darkness of space, to brighten the sky. From the debris of that enormous cracker, life-giving carbon and life emerged, including one rather special baby – the “Word made flesh” – and humankind has seen his glory, “full of God’s grace and truth” (John 1:14). That’s the miracle and wonder of it all.

So, pull the cracker, and wear the paper crown, and remember the “King of kings” who shared his crown with us, that we might reign in life with him (Romans 5:17). May you all have joy and peace in Jesus, whose manger-throne gave gentleness to our savage world, and blessed it with God’s unconditional love.

*Rev. John Ambrose*

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## Christmas cracker jokes

- Why can't Christmas trees knit? - Because they always drop their needles.
- What time is it when an elephant sits on your fence? - Time to get a new fence.
- What do you call a boomerang that doesn't come back? - A stick.
- What do you get if you eat Christmas decorations? - Tinsilitis.
- What does the Queen call her Christmas Broadcast? - The One Show.
- Why won't Santa's reindeers catch coronavirus? - They have herd immunity.
- Which side of a turkey has the most feathers? - The outside.

# Learning to cope with uncertainty during COVID-19

Over the past nine months, the word “uncertainty” has cropped up time and time again across the news and social media worldwide. The pandemic has created uncertainty in nearly every aspect of daily life.

This is not only down to worries over exposure to COVID-19 and access to medical care, but also concerns about the stability of the economy, job security, the availability of food and household supplies – and even when to book a holiday. We have needed to adjust and readjust our behaviour continually in response to changing risks and government guidelines.

My research focuses on “intolerance of uncertainty” – when uncertainty leads to high levels of distress. Recent research has highlighted that intolerance of uncertainty is likely to play a key role in our mental health as we cope with the pandemic. Understanding how we respond to uncertainty may help us alleviate some of the mental strain of the pandemic.

Uncertainty makes it difficult for us to predict what decisions to make and how to act. For this reason, it is common to find uncertainty upsetting, confusing and frustrating.

But some people tend to find uncertainty particularly distressing and challenging to cope with. They worry excessively over what will happen, as well as avoid situations with uncertainty. Ultimately, this distress makes good outcomes less pleasurable and bad outcomes more stressful.

Intolerance of uncertainty can be found within many different mental health issues. These include anxiety, mood, post-traumatic stress, eating and obsessive-compulsive disorders.

The pandemic has introduced an unexpected new level of uncertainty into all our lives. The obvious downside is that uncertainty on such a mass scale will likely lead to greater, more intense and generalised uncertainty distress in people with pre-existing mental health conditions. It may also generate further new cases in people who are vulnerable or at risk of developing mental health conditions due to their circumstances.

People are now relying on mental health services more than ever. It is likely that this increased demand on mental health services will continue over the next couple of years at the very least.

But the pandemic has presented an opportunity to raise awareness of uncertainty distress and how to best cope with it in the general population. Experimental research suggests that individuals with higher self-reported intolerance of uncertainty may benefit from clearer safety information and more experience of uncertainty.

It’s important to learn that uncertainty doesn’t always mean that something bad will happen – and it’s possible that current psychological therapies that aim to change core beliefs could be modified to target uncertainty distress.

So how do we apply this research to our experiences of uncertainty during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond? Uncertainty is a complex beast and may manifest itself in many different ways – but there are some things we can do to manage it.

Mental health professionals have suggested a number of different steps that can help. First and foremost, we can recognise that uncertainty is an inevitable part of life and we should take the time to acknowledge how it makes us feel.

Secondly, we can think about whether minimising uncertainty is a realistic or useful goal. For example, in relation to the pandemic, we can reduce some uncertainty related to COVID-19 transmission by following the government guidelines as best we can – while recognising that there are other aspects that are out of our control.

We can also challenge our uncertainty tolerance by expanding our comfort zone at our own pace. For instance, you could try ordering food from a new restaurant or watch a film that you know nothing about.

Encouragingly, the pandemic has spurred researchers and mental health professionals to band together in exploring potential solutions for uncertainty distress management.

At this stage, it is hard to measure what the impact of sustained uncertainty on such a global scale will be. For instance, we may end up with a global generation of people who are accepting of uncertainty – or who find uncertainty intolerable. For now, we will just have to monitor the situation, apply what strategies we can and prepare ourselves for the endless outcomes and possibilities.

*Stephen Harris*

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## Family News

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### Enid Rundle

Sadly, as most readers will already know, Enid passed away on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> November in Palmerston Care Home, Westcliff-on-Sea, where she had been living for nearly six years. Her funeral took place on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> November at Southend Crematorium with around twenty friends present.

Friends from the church attended – Malcolm and Heather Brown, Vera Knapton and Jim Clubb.

There were other friends present from Battlesbridge Free Church, Thundersley Congregational Church and the Salvation Army at South Woodham Ferrers. An obituary and tributes appear elsewhere.

*Enid touched the lives of many people and we pray for those who are mourning her loss. We also thank Mary Brewer for her work in organising Enid's funeral.*

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May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13 (NIV)

### **Please remember others in need of prayer...**

- **All our friends who have been physically or psychologically affected by the long-running pandemic, which has so adversely affected our ability to share Christian fellowship in its various guises. At this Christmas time, more than ever, we think of those who live alone.**



## URC News

### Rayleigh plans Latin-themed Christmas

Christ Church Rayleigh URC, in Essex, plans to bring a Latin American tradition to its community this Christmas. “We have several things planned for Christmas that the coronavirus can’t spoil!” said their Minister, Rev. Naomi Young-Rodas, before explaining:

“Las posadas is a Latin American tradition, where people dressed up as Mary and Joseph visit houses that are designated to be inns (posada in Spanish). The head of the procession carries a candle, as the actors travel to one house a night, for nine nights. At each house, the resident responds by singing a song, after which the pair are recognised and allowed to enter with their guests, to kneel around a Nativity scene and pray. Christmas carols are sung, children break open star-shaped piñatas and a feast is shared.

“In light of the pandemic, and instead of some of the Christmas activities that were cancelled – our town’s Christmas lights switch-on event, and our carol service – we decided to do our own, simplified version of the posadas tradition. Mary and Joseph will visit some homes of church members during December, but sadly, due to Covid-19, they will be refused entry! A few of the encounters will be filmed for display on our Facebook page and website.”

In addition to the posadas, the church is working in partnership with a local charity to provide food hampers for people who have fallen into poverty due to the pandemic. This work is coupled with a monetary appeal, launched in November, that will also help people in poverty. The church plans a digital carol service, where participants will simultaneously listen to the URC’s Daily Devotions service in their own homes.

### URC appoints new Assistant General Secretary



A new interim, Assistant General Secretary has been appointed to serve the United Reformed Church (URC) for seven months. Rev. Adrian Bulley, Synod Clerk for the URC National

Synod of Wales and Convenor of the URC Business Committee, is being seconded from 1 January-31 July 2021. He will take on some of the duties carried out under the office of the

Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship) on a part-time basis. The interim post will cover the period of recruiting a new Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship) after the Revd Richard Church retired earlier this year.

Dr Bradbury explains: “The Church faces many challenges at the minute, but with those challenges come great opportunities. Adrian’s secondment from the National Synod of Wales, to which we are deeply indebted, will help the Church take advantage of those opportunities while dealing with many of its challenges. Adrian’s breadth of experience in the URC – as Minister, Moderator and Synod Clerk – will be put to extensive use and I very much look forward working with him.”

### Activists welcome nuclear weapons ban



The UN treaty banning nuclear weapons is due to become international law on 22 January, to the delight of

campaigners worldwide. The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons – a Nobel Prize-winning coalition of organisations in 100 countries – welcomed the news as a historic milestone, as did survivors of atomic use and testing, who have been campaigning for the ban for many years.

The UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) bans the testing, production and stockpiling of nuclear weapons and devices. But, though it is soon to attain legal force, the world’s main nuclear powers – the US, the UK, Russia, China and France – have not signed it.

“The work isn’t done yet,” said Lucy Tiller, representing the Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) of the United Reformed Church, Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Church of Scotland and the Methodist Church in Great Britain.

“But we’re really excited that all the work that’s gone into securing this comprehensive treaty has finally paid off. JPIT’s partner churches believe that Christians are called to be peacemakers, and that anything so indiscriminate and immoral as nuclear weapons must be totally incompatible with the Bible’s teachings. With this treaty coming into force, there is clearly an international consensus that nuclear weapons have no place in society.”



## URC safeguarding strategic plan

In October, the URC launched a five-year safeguarding strategic plan. The plan requires all parts of the URC – its people, councils, committees and groups – to work together on six key objectives to ensure the Church provides a sustained community of care where everyone, particularly the most vulnerable, can find a place of love, pastoral care and support.

In 2016, the URC undertook a wide-ranging review of its safeguarding work since the Church was founded in 1972. The review included scrutiny of records and an invitation for people to contact the Church and report concerns. A major report then followed, with key points of learning and recommendations about what the Church could do to and improve its culture of safeguarding.

Following the conclusion of that the review, the Church took an important step in offering a heartfelt public apology to survivors of abuse, along with their families, supporters and communities. It also acknowledged that there were institutional failures and gave to the Safeguarding Advisory Group the task to review the implementation of the report.

Ioannis Athanasiou, URC Safeguarding Adviser, explained the six objectives of the plan:

1. Instil a safeguarding ethos of care and service within all congregations, synods and bodies.
2. Ensure initial and appropriate pastoral care and support to those who were impacted by safeguarding incidents and concerns.
3. Set up secure systems and processes of data and information handling and reporting safeguarding.
4. Ensure that the safeguarding policies and procedures are updated, reviewed and implemented in practice throughout the URC.
5. Provide appropriate and accessible safeguarding training for all those who are accountable for and working with children, young people and adults.
6. Encourage and build constructive partnerships with statutory, non statutory bodies, other denominations and faith-based communities.

Of the plan, Mr Athanasiou said it was an “opportunity to foster a culture in which ‘every child and adult is treated with dignity and respect, whatever their circumstances’ with members,

volunteers and workers who protect their rights, including those related to their data protection.”

Although the URC – both centrally and in its local churches – is committed to ensuring that its churches, services and programmes are safe places for everyone, and has in place robust policies and procedures to ensure the welfare and protection of the children, young people and vulnerable adults who attend our churches and church-associated groups and events, Mr Athanasiou referred to the plan as a chance for change.

He added: “We have an opportunity to form and share a theological basis for safeguarding, emphasising this as an aspect of Christian love and care for others. The safeguarding strategic plan offers a promising step to safeguard the integrity of creation, to walk the way safely all together and ensure the Church is a sustained community of care where everyone – particularly the most vulnerable – find a place of love, pastoral care and support.”

## URC 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2022

The URC celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2022. A 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary planning group has been appointed to serve as a project co-ordination group and oversee the jubilee planning in its overall direction. In November, the URC Mission Council was updated on the work of group and was consulted about the form of the celebrations and the legacy of the jubilee.

Rev. David Cornick and Rev. Robert Pope are working on a book to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary as is Steve Tomkins, editor of Reform.

Rev. Anne Sardeson is looking at a book about the hymnody and hymn-writers of the URC, and as Reform magazine will be celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary too, the team are starting to plan a series of articles about the anniversary of the URC.

Mission Council was asked what form celebrations should take. The planning group is envisaging a combination of local, regional and denominational events throughout the jubilee year in 2022. The first event to mark the celebration will be the URC Youth Assembly, taking place in January 2022. URC Youth’s theme for 2022 is Jubilee.

A provisional booking for Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022 has been made with the Methodist Central Hall in London, where on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1972 the Uniting Assembly took place. The day will include a programme of activities, culminating in an act of celebration and worship.

## Enid Rundle (1921 – 2020)

Enid passed away in Palmerston Care Home in Westcliff on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> November. Her funeral service, conducted by Rev. Jack Roche, former Minister of Hadleigh URC, took place at the West Chapel of Southend Crematorium on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> November.



Enid was born in Brockley, in south-east London, on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1921. Both her parents were Christians – her father was a Presbyterian, her mother an Anglican – and she was christened in the Presbyterian church at which her parents, Albert and Alice (née Haynes), were married in 1920. Her sister Avis, from whom she was never parted, was born on 13<sup>th</sup> February 1923.

During the First World War, her father sustained an injury to his foot that led him to be invalided out of the army so he joined the Civil Service in London. In the late 1920s, when Enid was about seven years old, the family moved to Thundersley from where Albert commuted to London. After suffering a long period of illness, he was able to transfer to Southend to avoid commuting. In Thundersley, the family lived at first in a rented bungalow in Chesterfield Avenue, then unmade, with water but no electricity. The rent was 12/6d (62.5p) per week. Despite the basic facilities, Enid and Avis enjoyed a happy childhood and were able to play with cousins who also lived in Thundersley.

The family attended Thundersley Congregational Church for both Sunday services though neither Enid nor Avis belonged to the Girls' Brigade or attended Sunday School. Enid's father became the Church Treasurer, a post he held for 21 years. Enid and Avis both attended Badger Hall School, a private primary school on Kiln Road, run by a Mrs Littlejohn. Their secondary education took place at a private school named Queenswood, in Leigh-on-Sea. On leaving school, Enid attended a commercial college in order to learn shorthand and typing skills, as did Avis.

In the early 1930s, the family moved from Chesterfield Avenue to a rented house in Church Road, Thundersley. In 1938, Enid became a member of Thundersley Congregational Church and was a Sunday School teacher and pianist when Rev. Eastman was pastor. After the war, Enid became involved in the Girls' Brigade not only as a pianist but also as an officer. She had happy memories and photos of trips away with the G.B. Company.

Enid's father died of a stroke in 1954, a few year's after his retirement. Enid's mother was subsequently left a property in Thundersley in a friend's will. The decision was taken to sell the inherited property and the proceeds were used to purchase the family home in Church Road.

Enid's first job was at Southend Hospital in the Records Department. She had several other jobs, including a number of years with John S. Lloyd's, an estate agency in Hadleigh, but for the last twenty years of her working life, until she retired in 1986, she worked for Benfleet Urban District Council.

In 1977, Enid and Avis decided that the Church Road garden was becoming too much to maintain so they moved with their mother to the bungalow in Triton Way, where they lived thereafter. Their mother appreciated that there were no stairs, as she was getting frail. Later, Avis gave up work to look after her mother whilst Enid carried on working to support the family. They continued to care for their mother until she passed away in 1982.

Although Enid remained a member at Thundersley Congregational Church, Avis began attending Hadleigh URC and Enid would accompany her to the evening service. Avis became a member at Hadleigh in 1988 and Enid eventually left Thundersley Congregational Church and became a member at Hadleigh in 2002. Enid became the regular pianist at the evening services for many years and also played at the monthly Midweek Service in the Small Hall. Enid was also involved in cooking for the Luncheon Club at Hadleigh. It is evident that she gained much enjoyment from practising the skills with which God had blessed her.

Enid and Avis also helped with the cooking at the Luncheon Club at Battlesbridge Free Church Enid until they were around 90 and Enid played piano there well into her 90s. Enid was also introduced by Irene Webb to the Salvation Army Home League at South Woodham Ferrers and played piano there for a few years, for which the ladies were very grateful.

Both Enid and Avis were passionate about animal welfare and supported many different animal charities. They raised funds by selling plants raised in their greenhouse and sold bric-a-brac from a table in their garden, at the church coffee morning and, in later years, at table sales in the area. Their shared love of animals was evidenced by the number of dogs that they owned, all of whom enjoyed a loving home.

Enid was both a skilled dressmaker and a skilled knitter. Amongst other things, she enjoyed making stuffed toys and animals, which she often entered in handicraft classes at Hadleigh Gardening Association shows. She also entered plants in the horticultural classes.

Enid's beloved sister, Avis, died on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2015. Enid had been admitted to hospital shortly before and was transferred to Palmerston Care Home in Westcliff in February 2015 for convalescence. She enjoyed the environment in the home and after a few weeks made the decision to remain there rather than try to live at home on her own. For two or three years she was able to attend occasional services and events at our church but she was also kindly taken on a regular basis to Battlesbridge Free Church by Peter and Mary Brewer and others.

When she became too frail to be safely transported, Enid missed the opportunity to worship and share fellowship at church. She was grateful for visits and phone calls from friends and was pleased to receive cards and letters. She was well looked after in the care home and enjoyed a caring friendship with Mandy, one of the other residents, who spent time with Enid in her room when she was having to rest. Having no family, Enid was also very grateful for the love and support provided by Peter and Mary Brewer. Mary became Enid's next of kin and took on the responsibility which that entailed, including the organisation of Enid's funeral.

*Enid was a faithful member of the congregation at Hadleigh URC and she will be remembered with great affection. We thank God for her exceptional long life of faith and service and for her compassion towards His creatures. Although she will be sadly missed by her many friends, they may take comfort in knowing that Enid is now reunited with her dear sister, Avis, in God's loving hands. May they both rest in eternal peace, together.*

**Malcolm Brown**

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## Photos from Enid's life



**At Badger Hall School in 1933**



**With Avis c.1942**



**With Avis on her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2011**



**With Heather Brown in 2002  
seated at the church organ**



**With Avis at the Wives' Fellowship  
garden party in 2008**



**With Peter Brewer at Palmerston on  
her 98<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2019**

Editor's note: I have uploaded more photos of Enid and Avis to my OneDrive cloud account. The main folder can be accessed using the following link <https://tinyurl.com/enid2020>. (This is a shortened link created using the facility provided by the tinyurl website.) There are various sub-folders which in, addition to photos, contain an audio recording of Enid's funeral, a pdf version of the order of service plus other items of memorabilia. In due course, I hope to scan and upload photos from Enid's Girls' Brigade days.

## Tribute to Enid from Royston Brackin

I first came to know Enid around 1985, when Susan and I were having difficulty transporting our three children to and from Thundersley Congregational Church, at which they were all members of the Brigades. (The Brigades at our church did not cater for their age groups.) When Enid became aware of our difficulties, she kindly brought our daughter Christine home after the Girls' Brigade meetings, in which Enid was a Brigade Officer.

A few years later, Enid came to our church when a small group from Thundersley decided to worship with us. Her sister Avis came with her and soon became a member. Enid joined the church some years later after she had ceased to work in the Girls' Brigade.

Enid became a most dependable and devoted church member. The church was very grateful when she offered to play the organ and piano at our evening services after Rene Potter had become incapacitated. She also played the piano at our monthly Midweek Services in the Small Hall.

When Avis's health began to deteriorate, life became more difficult for Enid and her own health began to deteriorate. After Avis died, Enid moved permanently into the care home, where,

with the kind help of the staff, she eventually settled. She found a niche for her abilities by playing the piano, which was her own piano that had been moved to the care home. She also enjoyed tending plants in the care home garden and greenhouse.

She still visited us from time to time to attend services and join us for special events. Among other events, she still came to our New Year's Eve Social for which she continued to prepare the parcel for the 'pass the parcel' game, of which she was fond, and which she had arranged for many years previously. Sadly, for the last two or three years, due to further ill health, she was much less able to attend our church and we missed her from many services and events which she had expressed a wish to attend.

Enid was a very loyal and hard working lady who was dedicated to our Lord's service. She, together with her sister Avis, with whom she lived all her life, had a very quiet and unassuming manner but behind that was a very strong spirit. She will be sadly missed.

*Royston Brackin*

Hadleigh URC Church Secretary

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## Tribute to Enid from Palmerston Care Home

The following tribute to Enid was prepared by Ruth Gates, the manager of Palmerston Care Home, and was read out at Enid's funeral by Rev. Jack Roche...

Enid was a strong individual in a small package and it was a pleasure to have her at Palmerston.

She tended our garden and we had wonderful displays throughout the spring, summer and autumn. Enid also helped with the growing of vegetables and was most proud of the harvest of tomatoes and strawberries each year. She was involved with everything in the care home and her strong will kept her going.

As a manager, I sometimes felt that Enid could well manage a riot within the home if something was not quite right! She had a caring side and enjoyed helping others, using her knitting skills in making paw protectors for dogs and cats for the Animal Welfare Trust and little hats for newborn babies in the neo-natal ward at Southend Hospital.

Enid showed her individuality and her determination to keep going, being as independent as she could. Unfortunately, her physical form could not keep up with her and last year she started to slow down. She still remained a strong member of our family at Palmerston. We could hear her piano keyboard being played from her bed and, though there were now more wrong notes, we could still identify the hymns.

Enid touched the home with her caring nature and ease in making friends. She will be greatly missed by the staff and her friends. The saying goes that 'the best things come in small packages'. This was very true of Enid, with perhaps a streak of 'stubborn', to boot! We will miss you, Enid.

*From all at Palmerston Care Home*



# The secrets of Essex mince pies

The history of mince pies can be traced back to the 1200s, when European crusaders returned from wars in the Middle East bringing recipes containing meats, fruit and spices with them. Typically, early mince pies contained minced meat, suet, fruit and spices such as cinnamon, cloves and nutmeg, and were a large oblong shape.

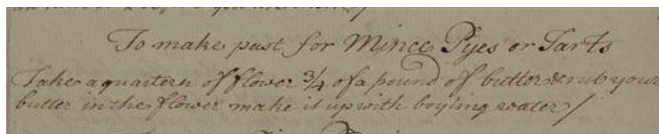
Surprisingly, they even attracted controversy in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Mince pies were stigmatised by the Puritan government under Oliver Cromwell in the 1650s due to perceived associations with Catholicism but people did not give them up so easily.

Mince pies began to get sweeter during the 1700s, as cheap sugar arrived in Britain from West Indian slave plantations. By the 1800s, the pies had evolved into the small, round, sweet pies that we recognise today. While suet is still used in many recipes, the inclusion of meat was largely dropped altogether.

For some of us, Christmas just isn't Christmas without a mince pie (or two). The Women's Own meeting of Stockwell Congregational Chapel in Colchester lamented in December 1947: 'Another austerity Christmas. No mince pies, only a bit of cake to have with our cup of tea'.

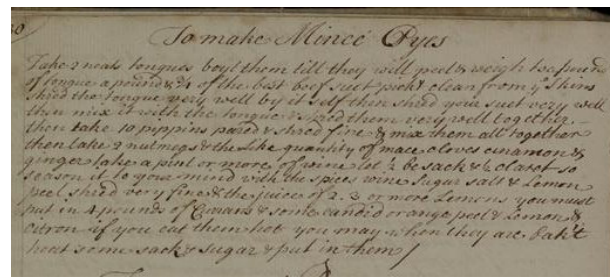
A traditional mince pie recipe which includes boiled ox tongues can be found in the recipe book of Elizabeth Slany, which she started in 1715. Elizabeth was born near Worcester, and in 1723 married Benjamin LeHook, a factor (or agent) in the City of London. Elizabeth lived to the grand age of 93, dying in 1786.

## ***To make past [pastry] for Mince Pyes or Tarts***



*Take a quarter of flower  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a pound of butter & rub your butter in the flower make it up with boyling water.*

## ***To make Mince Pyes***



*Take 2 neats tongues [ox tongues] boyl them till they will peel & weigh to a pound of tongue a pound &  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the best beef suet pickt clean from y<sup>e</sup> Skins shred the tongue very well by itself then shred your suet very well then take 10 pippins pared & shred fine & mix them all together then take 2 nutmegs & the like quantity of mace cloves cinamon & ginger take a pint or more of wine let  $\frac{1}{2}$  be sack &  $\frac{1}{2}$  claret so season it to your mind with the spices wine sugar salt & lemon peel shred very fine & the juice or 2, 3 or more Lemons you must put in 4 pounds of Currans & some candid orange peel & Lemon & cirton if you eat them hot you may when they are bak't heat some sack & sugar & put it in them.*

A slightly later recipe from the 1770s which omits the inclusion of meat can be found in the cookery book of Mary Rooke, of Langham Hall. Mary's (fairly alcoholic) recipe for 'minc'd Pye meat without meat' calls for a mixture of three pounds of grated apples, two pounds of finely chopped beef suet, two pounds of currants, two pounds of raisins, the rind and pulp of two boiled lemons, half a pint of brandy and half a pint of port wine, the juice of four lemons, sugar to taste, and half a pound of blanched, sliced almonds. The ingredients were to be mixed well then put into small jars and covered with bladder to keep them airtight. When serving the pies Mary recommended small slices candied orange and lemon to be put on top of them, and a mixture of brandy and port wine to slosh over the pies to moisten them.

From the Winter 2013 edition of Your Essex

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A jockey was riding the favourite at a race meeting, and was well ahead of the field. His horse rounded the final corner, when suddenly the jockey was hit on the head by a turkey and a string of sausages. He managed to keep control of his mount and pulled back into the lead, only to be struck by a box of Christmas crackers and a dozen mince pies as he went over the last fence. With great skill he managed to steer the horse to the front of the field once more when, on the run in, he was hit on the head by a bottle of sherry and a Christmas pudding. Unable to recover in time, he ended up finishing second. In a rage, the jockey dashed to the race stewards' office to complain that he had been seriously hampered!

## The Ridgwell connection

Regular visitors to the church may have noticed an A4 poster on the vestibule noticeboard which displays thumbnail images of all the pastors and ministers that have served the church since its founding in 1904. The poster was originally created for our centenary celebrations in 2004. Those who have seen it may recall that there are no images shown for three of the ministers, namely **Rev. Emyln Davies** (the first minister), **Rev. Oswald Bale** and **Rev. Joseph Ridgwell**.

I haven't updated the copy of the poster at the church recently but we do now have a photo of **Rev. Emyln Davies**, taken from the Southend Standard of 12<sup>th</sup> August 1909. In fact, I wrote about Rev. Davies and included that photo in the May 2018 edition of the magazine.

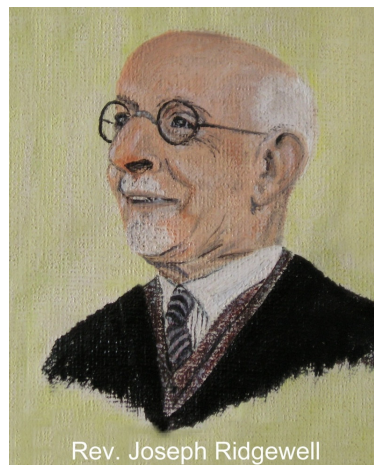


Although the church was founded in 1904, Rev. Davies was our first minister and accepted a call to a joint pastorate comprising Hadleigh and Pitsea Congregational Churches in July 1909. (Pitsea Congregational Church no longer exists but the town is served by Basildon & Pitsea URC.)

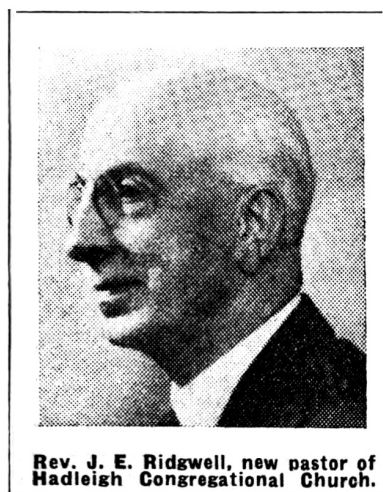
We still do not have a photo of Rev. Bale. I haven't given up hope as he is mentioned in the Southend Standard in connection with fundraising efforts for troops at the Kingsway Cinema during WW2 so there may be a photo to be found.

For one minister – **Rev. Joseph Ridgwell** – there was no photo available but we did have a likeness taken from a painting. Rev. Ridgwell was born on 17<sup>th</sup> May 1878 and on the 1939 Register is described as a retired civil servant and Congregational Minister. He served as minister at Hockley & Hawkwell Congregational Church, from 1939 to 1944, at which point he retired. At some point thereafter, a mural painting was made of past Hockley & Hawkwell ministers and, back in 2004, Richard Prior kindly sent me a photo of

that part of the painting which features Rev. Ridgwell. I had no idea whether it was a true likeness but thought it was a rather nice image and was very happy to include it on the poster rather than have an empty space.



Fast forward to 2020 and you can imagine my delight when, a few weeks ago, David Hurrell, one of my Community Archive colleagues, discovered a photo of Rev. Joseph Ridgwell in a bound volume of Southend Standard newspapers from 1945. The photo comes from the Southend Standard of 26<sup>th</sup> July 1945 in which it appeared with a caption but without any accompanying text.



Since receiving the photo, I have discovered a brief note in the Southend Standard of 19<sup>th</sup> July 1945 (the previous week), which reads:

*“Rev. J. E. Ridgwell, of St. James’ Close, Westcliff, who was minister at Hockley from 1939 to 1944, has accepted a unanimous invitation to become pastor of Hadleigh Congregational Church and hopes to commence his ministry shortly. Mr Ridgwell, during the past year, has had oversight of the Crowstone House of Friendship.”*



I wonder if any reader out there knows anything about the Crowstone House of Friendship. Google was not my friend when I tried searching for it on the Internet but this did not surprise me.

Rev. Ridgwell is described as ‘pastor’ in the Southend Standard but in Ron Patten’s *Brief History* booklet, compiled for the church’s 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Ron refers to his appointment as minister. Interestingly, I discovered from the *Brief History* booklet that Rev. Ridgwell had taken temporary pastoral charge of the church in 1938 when Rev. George Butcher resigned. However, ill-health forced him to resign from that role later in the same year.

Ron records the start date of Rev. Ridgwell’s ministry as January 1946 so there may have been some delay between his acceptance of the invitation, as reported in the Southend Standard, and his official appointment. (I have discovered via Ancestry that Rev. Ridgwell’s first wife, Jessie, had died in January 1945.) Ron relates how Rev. Ridgwell became well-known in the area for his sense of humour and his fund of jokes and stories. However, he did not stay too long and resigned in April 1948, moving to Hockley.

All this may seem a long time ago to most readers but a connection with Rev. Ridgwell was maintained until much more recent times. Shortly after leaving Hadleigh, Rev. Ridgwell married Miss Dorothy Lucke, who was a long-standing member at Hadleigh and a well-loved worker in the Sunday School and Scout Group, being leader of the Cub Pack. Dorothy was already living in Hockley where she had moved to be housekeeper for her brother. Joseph and Dorothy enjoyed a happy marriage until Joseph passed away on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1961 at the age of 82.

Over the years, Dorothy Ridgwell retained her links with Hadleigh and in 1986 she was invited back to unveil the Memorial Wall in the new foyer during the Dedication Service for the 1986 extension to the Church buildings – see photo.



Dorothy with Rev. Peter Brewer & Royston Brackin in 1986

In the latter years of her life, Dorothy lived in Spa Court care home in Hockley where old friends, including Marjorie and Geoff Chase, were able to visit her. I happen to know that Jean Hodges, the oldest Hadleigh Messenger reader, was very good friends with Dorothy. Jean, who celebrated her 102<sup>nd</sup> birthday on 22<sup>nd</sup> September, lived nearby in Bramerton Road, Hockley, until moving into Bradbury Home in Southend a couple of years ago.

Shortly before her death, Dorothy moved to a care home in Clacton, following a spell in Southend Hospital. Her brother lived in the same home. She died on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1989 at the age of 96 and Ron and Mary Patten wrote a tribute to her in the September 1989 church magazine recalling her long service at Hadleigh – she was the oldest church member – and her return visit in 1986. They described her thus: “To all, she was a wise counsellor and loving friend and supportive to all members of her family. Throughout her life she maintained a mind ever open to new ideas and always respected all points of view and above all there was a true and Christian humility.”

Ron and Mary’s tribute ended with a verse that Dorothy had included in her last Christmas card to them, which came from a version of the hymn ‘*Lord, when the wise men came from far*’ by Sidney Godolphin (1610–1643). They considered that it might serve as a fitting epitaph to Dorothy. Given that we are in the Christmas season, I think it quite appropriate to include a couple of verses from that hymn here:

*Wise men, in tracing Nature’s laws,  
Ascend unto the highest cause;  
Shepherds with humble fearfulness  
Walk safely, though their light be less.  
Though wise men better know the way,  
It seems no honest heart can stray.*

*There is no merit in the wise  
But love, the shepherds’ sacrifice.  
Wise men, all ways of knowledge passed,  
To the shepherds’ wonder come at last.  
To know can only wonder breed,  
And not to know is wonder’s seed.*

Overleaf, I have included a testimony by Dorothy Ridgwell on how she came to faith. I hope readers will enjoy learning more about this much-loved Christian lady.

*Malcolm Brown*



## How I Came to Faith by Dorothy Ridgwell (née Lucke)

I had the great privilege of a Christian upbringing. My beloved parents and grandparents were ardent members of the Wesleyan Methodist Church [at Plaistow] and really lived out their faith in the home. Sunday was special. We attended Morning Service – Evening was optional – and afternoon Sunday School (not always willingly) but our parents came too and there was no getting out of it – we went. How proud we were to see Grandpa conducting the quite large choir, and Uncle Fred at the organ!

Our Sunday School was large in numbers, and sometimes somewhat boisterous, meeting from 2.30 – 4.00 p.m. We came together after classes at 3.30, and had a talk from a visiting speaker for twenty minutes before closing. Whether we listened or fidgeted depended on the speaker.

The one we liked best and were really glad to see was the Minister's wife. She was always full of vitality and interest; night after night she was to be found in one or other of the local pubs, talking to those inside about Jesus and trying to persuade them to give up the drink, which was the ruin of so many homes in those hard times. One afternoon, she made a moving plea that if we felt that we wanted to follow Jesus, when we got home, to write it down in our Bible or any other precious book – "it will help you to keep true," she said.

I was greatly moved. When I got home, I crept upstairs to my bedroom, and wrote on the back page of my Bible: "I gave my heart to Jesus on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of October, 1904". I told nobody, not even Mum, but remember even today, the thrill I felt when a few days later, I found written on the opposite page: "I am very glad my little girl did so. He will help her in all her ways if she asks for His help and guidance". That Mum knew and respected my silence! Although we never spoke about it, she knew, was happy about it, and asked for no further explanation. It made a very strong link between us, which lasted all her life.

I really loved Jesus in a child's way and tried to be true to Him until I went to Southlands Training College in 1912. Here, in the fortnightly Divinity Lectures my revolt began. The lecturer, Dr. A. B., was one of the leading theologians in the Wesleyan Methodist Church, a prominent scholar - a little man with a thin piping voice, and so incredibly dull; almost every other statement he made ended with "See my manual, p.\_\_\_\_" or "See my shorter manual, p.\_\_\_\_"; both of which

were among our study books. This was so different from the bright, happy religion to which I was accustomed that I didn't want to hear, and began absenting myself from his lectures.

Nobody seemed to notice, so I shared my doings with another girl who was equally bored; then we both absented, and used that lecture time playing badminton in the gym, and returning to the main building in time to mingle with others coming out from Hall. We never went to another lecture, ever; how we passed our final exam in R.E. I shall never know, but we both did. But all the time I knew quite well that I was acting wrongly, but refused to let it worry me.

In our senior year, we were allowed two Sunday evenings a month to leave College after 4 o'clock tea, and go where we liked, as long as we were back by 9.30 p.m. On my first pass, I went with several others up to Victoria Station to have a look round. On the platform was a sweet and tobacco kiosk open for business, which several of the girls patronised. I can honestly say I was quite shocked, for never in my life had I bought anything on a Sunday: it just was not done in our household – indeed it would have been difficult to find any shop open had we wished to.

Being a coward at heart, I spent my last silver sixpence on a small box of chocolates, and felt horribly guilty – couldn't eat one of the chocolates, but the others had no such scruples. It was only a short time before I dulled my conscience, and made it a regular habit, always feeling uneasy about it, all the same. "Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy" – always at the back of my mind.

Little by little, other loyalties began to fade. I took delight in questioning the staunch adherence to the C. of E. of my best friend, asking her what she made of the 39 Articles of Faith, and the Creeds, and almost delighting when she had no answer. But though she wouldn't explain, she never forsook her adherence to the Church, and we remained close friends until her death in 1970.

At the end of August 1914, I started on my teaching career choosing London Dockland. [Now living in SE Essex] this entailed travelling from Leigh every day but it was an area that I chose, and I learned at first hand the appalling social conditions of those days – so much real poverty, appalling stresses where the pub (at almost every corner) was the one bright place, and was full every night with men and women.

In school, my main problem was dealing with the daily scripture lesson – I could scarcely teach others what I scarcely believed myself. I solved the problem by getting the children to learn by heart passages that I once loved – some of the Psalms, the Commandments, the Beatitudes, a few short passages from Proverbs, and some of the great passages from Isaiah. I have often hoped over the years that those scripture verses have been as much comfort and inspiration to those children as they have been to me.

In 1917, I met a Canadian gunner on active service in France. He was tall, very handsome with a charming Welsh accent. He used to spend all his leave with us in Leigh, always finishing with taking me to a London show. It was decided between us that when he was demobbed (back in Canada) he would return to Leigh and we would get married. He went back in the winter of 1919, and I began to make preparations for our wedding, looking happily for a letter from him. But weeks went by – and months – but no word came and I was broken-hearted. And, of course, I blamed God, and became even more hostile – to Him and everyone around me. Mother often looked at me wonderingly. I knew she was grieved for me but I didn't care, and refused to go back to teaching.

Instead, I went to Denmark for a shortened course in a new P.E. technique being developed there. I thoroughly enjoyed it, and got over the crunch of disappointed young love. Then I began teaching my new skill, and was soon fully occupied in four local schools, and Saturday and evening classes in various parts of London, too engrossed in my own concerns to notice how Mum was failing in sight and general health, and I never attempted to lend a helping hand. Then Mum had a severe illness and, when she began to recover, Dad insisted she had a holiday. I began to realise my selfishness, and said I would accompany her, and we went to Bournemouth.

On the day before we were due to return, we went to Boscombe, and getting caught in a heavy thunderstorm, took cover in a shopping arcade, in front of a bookshop, with a stall of second-hand books in front. There, amongst rather a kag-mag collection, was a little brown book, obviously new. I picked it up – “Social Life and Customs of the Israelites”. My eyes fell upon a paragraph which described how the people forsook the God of their fathers, and followed pagan gods, or none at all, and became worldly in mind and behaviour, grieving the God of their race. Almost at once, a real Voice spoke to me, plainly – “This

is what you are doing to Me”. I was shaken and very ashamed, for it was true.

That night in my room, I asked His forgiveness, quite overcome with grief. We returned home the next day, Mother sensing that something had distressed me, but not probing – I guess she knew it would come out. It did – the following day, which was Sunday, I asked her if I might come to [Hadleigh Congregational] Church with her in the evening, and on the way I opened my heart to her with such a sense of relief and awakened love. In that evening service, quite unbeknownst to the young Minister, Rev. Clifford Lansdowne, I gave my heart to Jesus again, meaning it most ardently. About two or three weeks later, Clifford called to ask me if I would play piano for the Primary Dept. for a few weeks while the regular pianist was in hospital. It was the last thing in the world that I would have chosen to do, for I was no pianist (except in a room alone) but I felt God was trusting me again, and my heart jumped for joy. The first afternoon was a nightmare; I was so nervous that perspiration trickled off my hands on to the keys; the next week it was easier, and soon I quite enjoyed that hour. In a few weeks I was asked to take a class too. The piano work was left to me too, for when she came back from her illness, Doris took over leadership of the Primary Dept.

After the summer holidays, I was asked to take P.E. with the G.L.B. Company, a large, enthusiastic band of Juniors and Seniors. This was right up my street; we had some great times. Then I was asked to help with the Wolf Cubs, a vigorous Pack of 36. There was a lot to learn here, but we fitted in well together. But really my greatest joy was that this work had been put into my hands, quite unexpected and unsought; I felt I knew some thing of what Peter felt that morning long ago on the shores of Galilee, when the risen Lord reinstated him,

The days of evacuation in 1940 broke up all our activities. Soldiers came one evening while the Pack was in session, and took possession of all the premises bar the Church itself; in no time the ground was covered with tents, the cubs running around “helping” the soldiers joyfully. Only a very diminished Sunday School remained. I remember, one Sunday afternoon, we went over to the air-raid shelter three times, much to the children's delight.

So you see how much Hadleigh holds my love. Hockley does too, of course – I have received nothing but loving friendship there since 1950, but Hadleigh will always be most special, for there I found my Lord again

*Dorothy Ridgwell*



## Let's thank seen and unseen people

**Rev. Clare Downing reflects on contrasting experiences in November, highlighting the value of behind-the-scenes people.**

Firstly, I had the privilege of representing the United Reformed Church at the Cenotaph. What is always, I imagine, a meticulously organised event, was subject to a new level of precision as stewards ensured social distancing in the well-ordered procession. In an eerily quiet city, I stood alongside leaders of other denominations and faith groups in Whitehall as the ceremony proceeded, uninterrupted even by the voice of the broadcaster David Dimbleby.

Then, there was Mission Council, which met digitally for the second time in its history, at the end of last week. Since July, many of us have learnt far more about how best to facilitate online meetings, so I rather think that Peter and I had an easier job than Nigel and Derek did in the summer. Unlike the Cenotaph, there was plenty of talking – though no audible squawking of parakeets in the background. And I suspect that some folk might have appreciated a David Dimbleby commentary on what was going on.

Despite the differences between the two occasions, there are two similarities that I was very aware of. The first is that both events were held in the context of prayer. Remembering, or looking forward, there was a clear acknowledgement of the presence of God among us.

The second was the way in which the smooth running of both depended so much on a mostly unseen group of people in the background. The gentle shepherding of each group of participants on Remembrance Sunday, by people who remained to a great extent invisible, was vital. And at Mission Council, along with the Clerks and General Secretary, we had a 'tech' team' who worked tirelessly to ensure that the event went without any hitches.

It's the same in many of our churches. There are the people who are visible – those who take a lead in various ways. Then there are those who might never be noticed, except that if they are missing or things go wrong. Of course, some of those behind-the-scenes people are more than happy to stay in the background. But perhaps we need to recognise their contributions a little more often.

However you are meeting at this time, take a moment to notice, to thank and to encourage a steward, a 'techie', the person who deals with the boiler, or who mutes people on Zoom... Let's give thanks for the gifts of the whole people of God, seen and unseen.

God bless,

*Clare Downing*

Posted November 2020

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## Facebook humour...

- Decided to be brave and book a holiday for next year. Thought it might be nice to stay in the UK, however, due to an inadvertent typo while booking it, I'm now looking forward to a week on the Norfolk B roads...
- I feel really sorry for my neighbour today. He spent all day yesterday laying new turf in his front garden and then last night someone stole it! He's back out there now, looking forlorn...
- Woke up to the very sad news that my best friend died from heartburn yesterday. I can't believe Gav is gone...
- **IMPORTANT NOTICE** - If anybody has dropped £3k rolled up and secured with elastic bands outside the White Hart earlier today **PLEASE GET IN TOUCH ASAP**. I have your elastic bands...

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## Computer Corner

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### Blessings of Christmas – Hugh Bonneville & The Mormon Tabernacle Choir

**Interesting  
video**

This is an excerpt from a Christmas Concert that contains several carols and also tells the story behind the hymn 'It is well with my soul', which was covered in the April 2020 magazine. Hugh Bonneville is a fantastic narrator and the singing is by probably the best choir in the world. It is both very moving and very uplifting. Watch it on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day and have a hankie ready!

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aPmAyTiygoo> or go to YouTube.com and search for the title above.

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### ONS Blog post – Bringing the latest data on COVID-19 all in one place

**Interesting  
blog post**

This blog post announces the launch of a new interactive tool that brings together the latest data on the COVID-19 pandemic so it is accessible in one place. As the blog post puts it: "Whether you are a curious member of the public, a journalist or an expert user, this tool will enable you to follow the narrative and stay up to date with how the pandemic is progressing."

URL: <https://blog.ons.gov.uk/2020/12/11/bringing-the-latest-data-on-covid-19-all-in-one-place/>

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### Printable calendars and more

**Useful  
free  
downloads**

Cartridge People, from whom we purchase toner cartridges for the church printer, have a number of useful free downloads on their company blog including printable A4 calendars, desk calendars, Christmas cards and even a chess set!

Download via: <https://www.cartridgepeople.com/info/blog>

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## Word Search – Words of 2020

Words that mostly we would rather not be words of 2020...

S N D V B M S E T I D C X O T C Y K N K	ANTIBODY
J T E S T G L M C O R R R T U S K S I R	BUBBLE
A E C I Z H R E I T V I V V P V K O X N	CORONAVIRUS
G T T H M F W P C B V K X O K J Q A K T	COVID
E V U E N I C C A V I Y U G L M X P U R	MASK
F V N S W Z E N I T N A R A U Q S Y E P	FURLOUGH
T H T X L V P R B M I J F O B H P S L E	ISOLATE
R G M P I S N W O D K C O L Z Y I B O P	KEYWORKER
A U J A D N Y H J B X Z S F A T K B T A	LOCKDOWN
N O A R H I Z D A F E M V S I S E V O N	MOONSHOT
S L G O I V V X O E Q A U N X V Z R H D	PANDEMIC
M R Z U Z R E O T B V R A P T N E G S E	QUARANTINE
I U W L Q L S A C V I S N R Y K N L N M	RISK
S F D X B B L J V V H T A R R H X F O I	SANITISER
S P E B V O A E A E B C N O V F O C O C	SPIKE
I P U M S V F N Z L K I W A G L M G M S	TEST
O B B I N H O N G I J Y V J T T W S I K	TIER
N R F Z Z R X Q N K E X R I K M L V W S	TRACKING
K P W L O U K G G K R U G I N E C I O A	TRANSMISSION
H N Y C T Z U Y P K V R I F A F J B A M	VACCINE

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

# Good News From Heav'n The Angels Bring

For Christmas Eve

Good news from heav'n the angels bring  
Glad tidings to the earth they sing:  
To us this day a child is giv'n,  
To crown us with the joy of heav'n.

This is the Christ, our God and Lord,  
Who in all need shall aid afford;  
He will Himself our Saviour be,  
From all our sins to set us free.

All hail, Thou noble Guest, this morn,  
Whose love did not the sinner scorn;  
In my distress Thou com'st to me;  
What thanks shall I return to Thee?

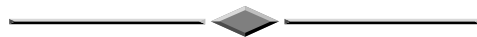
Were earth a thousand times as fair,  
Beset with gold and jewels rare,  
She yet were far too poor to be  
A narrow cradle, Lord, for Thee.

Ah, dearest Jesus, Holy Child,  
Make Thee a bed, soft, undefiled,  
Within my heart, that it may be  
A quiet chamber kept for Thee.

Praise God upon His heavenly throne,  
Who gave to us His only Son;  
For this His hosts, on joyful wing,  
A blest New Year of mercy sing.

Text based on Luke 2:1-18

*Martin Luther (1535)*



## A Christmas blessing



Whoever you are,  
Wherever you may live,  
Whatever your circumstances:

May the Lord hold you safe this Christmas;

May the Lord bless you and keep you close this Christmas;

May the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you this Christmas;

May the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you and give you peace this Christmas.

*Amen*

