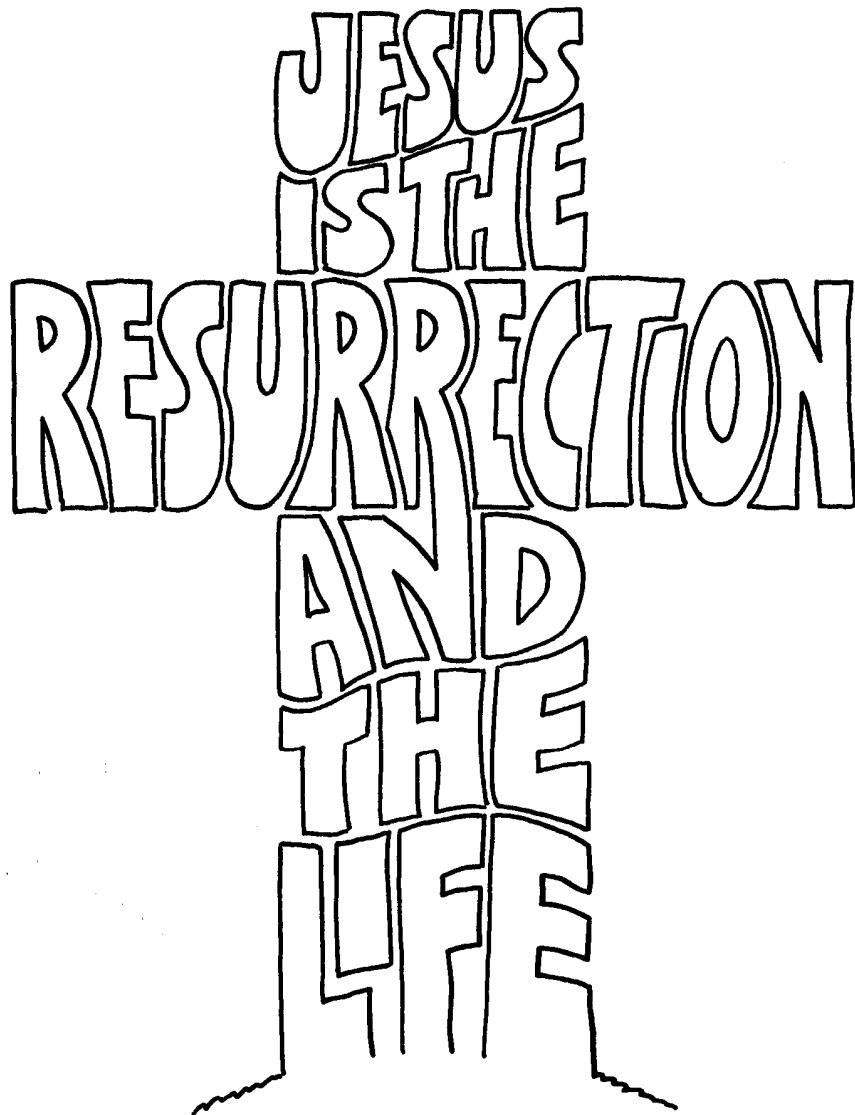


THE HADLEIGH MESSENGER

April 2022



Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" – *John 11:25-26 (NKJV)*

The Magazine of the
United Reformed Church, Hadleigh, Essex

Castle Point Bible Society Action Group

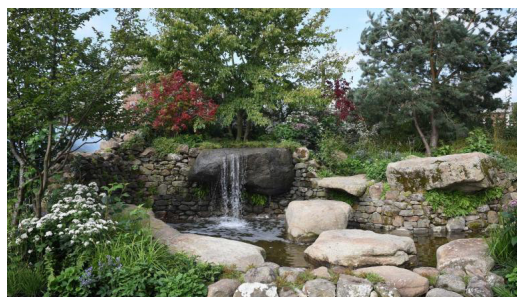
The annual committee meeting of the Castle Point Bible Society Action Group took place on Thursday 24th March 2022. Mrs Janice Phillips (Secretary/Treasurer) reported that, as a result of a coffee morning at Benfleet Methodist Church, Bible Society box-holders and personal and church donations, the sum of £630 was raised last year and forwarded to Bible Society HQ.

The Secretary reported that a short video-link presentation about Ukraine contains some upsetting footage but, at least, verifies that the Ukraine Bible Society still exists. There has been no recent message from the Russian Bible Society. A tough situation exists in China, where churches are again forced to meet 'underground'. No religious content is allowed on the Internet and there is a shortage of paper on which to print bibles. Please pray for the work of the Bible Society and thank God that we live in a country where we have ready access to God's word.

I wonder if readers of the Hadleigh Messenger remember seeing the 2021 Chelsea Flower Show on television last September. The Bible Society's 'Psalm 23 Garden' was a triumph of design and won a gold medal for its designer, Sarah Eberle, plus an award for 'best construction' and another for 'best sanctuary garden'. The garden received great coverage on programmes such as 'Gardener's World', local radio etc.

However, winning medals was not the point of it, of course. In an age when – in the West at least – scripture is often ignored or forgotten, the Psalm 23 Garden was a way of saying to huge numbers of people 'The Bible has something to say to you today.' Its depiction of the green pastures and quiet water spoke of rest that we experience in our lives and, particularly, of the healing power of God's creation.

The water falling into the pool evoked refreshment but it was not a comfortable landscape – the stepping stones and huge rocks created a sense of difficulty and danger, a reference to the 'valley of the shadow of death' of which the psalm speaks.



At the same time, it was a place of life and movement – not just because of the falling water but also because the garden was quickly colonised by insects of all kinds. On the first morning that the Chelsea Flower Show was open, bees were busy, a butterfly rested on the warm stones, a dragonfly investigated the pool and a robin sang from the waterfall rock.

After the conclusion of the show, the Psalm 23 Garden was re-created at the new hospice in Winchester. It provides a space of spiritual nourishment and reflection for patients, their families and the hospice staff thus reminding them that God loves them and walks with them to the end of their lives.

To learn more about the work of the Bible Society, request a copy of 'Word in Action' magazine. I will happily obtain a copy for you. You can also e-mail any questions or send comments to wia@biblesociety.org.uk.

Vera Knaption

P.S. The Psalm 23 Garden will be shown in Songs of Praise on Sunday 13th April at 1.15pm.

Psalm 23 (King James Bible)

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

PREACHING ARRANGEMENTS FOR APRIL 2022

| | | | |
|--------------------------|---------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Sun 3 rd Apr | 10.30am | Morning Service | Mr Adrian Tinning |
| Sun 10 th Apr | 10.30am | Palm Sunday Service | Mr Adrian Tinning |
| Sun 17 th Apr | 10.30am | Easter Service with Holy Communion | Rev. Dr Jim Tarrant MA MTh |
| Sun 24 th Apr | 10.30am | Morning Service | Mr John Amos |

FLOWER ROTA

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Sun 3 rd Apr | Vera Knapton - wedding anniversary |
| Sun 10 th Apr | |
| Sun 17 th Apr | Jean Reeve - in memory of her parents |
| Sun 24 th Apr | |

| | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ELDERS' MEETING | CHURCH MEETING |
| Wed 13 th Apr 3.30pm | Thu 28 th April 12.45pm |

Good Friday & Easter Day services

Good Friday 15th April – As mentioned in last month's magazine, a Churches Together in Hadleigh united service will be held at St Michael's Church in Daws Heath. The service will start at 10.30am and will be followed by refreshments, including hot cross buns. Anyone wishing to attend the service who does not have transport is welcome to travel with me provided I have space available.

Easter Day 17th April – The traditional Easter Sunrise Service at Hadleigh Castle will be held this year, starting at 5.45am. Afterwards, those wishing to do so may avail themselves of breakfast at McDonalds in Hadleigh High Street. The service is being organised by the Salvation Army Hadleigh Temple.

Malcolm Brown

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|--|---|
| <p>HADLEIGH URC OFFICERS</p> <p>Interim Moderators: Rev. Jim Tarrant/Rev. Celia Whitman</p> <p>Hon. Secretary: Mr Royston Brackin (01702 558862)</p> <p>Acting Hon. Treasurer: Mr Royston Brackin</p> <p>Serving Elders: Mr Royston Brackin Mrs Heather Brown (01702 557678) Mr Malcolm Brown (01702 557678) Miss Jean Reeve (01702 554907)</p> | <p>Useful information</p> <p>Address: 1 Church Road, Hadleigh, Benfleet, SS7 2DQ Website: www.hadleighsexurc.org.uk</p> <p>An invitation</p> <p>We invite you to join us for worship and fellowship at any of our services where a warm welcome awaits. If you are in need of help that the ministry of the church can supply then be assured of our interest and concern. If you are suffering from ill health, loneliness or bereavement and feel that we could help, or if you would like to ask for a prayer or personal visit then please let one of our church officers know. All such requests are treated in the strictest confidence.</p> |
|--|---|

Christ the Lord is risen today!

Jesus's death on the cross, and His resurrection on Easter morning are both part of the redemption story. Paul links them in this way: 'He was delivered for our offences [the Cross] and raised again [the Resurrection] for our justification' (Romans 4:25). Charles Wesley does likewise in his glorious Easter anthem.

*Christ the Lord is risen today!
Sons of men and angels say.
Raise your songs and triumph high
Sing, ye heavens, thou earth reply.*

Charles wrote the hymn in 1739, a year after his Pentecost Sunday evangelical conversion, and the year in which he began his open-air preaching.

Like all his hymns that followed in the next four decades, this hymn is full of New Testament references and allusions. A great stone was rolled into the opening of the grave where Jesus was laid, and as Matthew records, the Jewish authorities 'made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting a guard' (27:66). But all to no purpose! Christ, the Lord of Life, could not be imprisoned by death!

*Vain the stone, the watch, the seal
Christ hath burst the gates of hell.
Death in vain forbids Him rise
Christ hath opened Paradise!*

The New Testament teaches that Christ's resurrection was the Father's seal of approval on His obedient life and atoning death. His resurrection was the proof that He was indeed

Jesus Christ the Lord, as Paul argues in Romans 1:4. 'Declared to be the Son of God ...by the resurrection from the dead.' Charles Wesley works these great salvation truths into his verses. 'Love's redeeming work is done.' 'Once He died our souls to save.' 'Lives again our glorious King.' 'Where, O death, is now thy sting?' 'Second life we all receive.' 'In our Heavenly Adam live.'

As our Lord promised His disciples long ago – and still promises us; 'Because I live, you will also live' (John 14:19). The Resurrection of Christ, viewed as a historical fact, is only part of the New Testament teaching. His conquest of death He now shares with all His people. Christians are the people of the Resurrection! We are now 'made alive with Christ;' 'raised up with Him,' and already seated 'in heavenly places' (Ephesians 1:4-6). And Charles Wesley takes up this great theme of how believers share in their Lord's resurrection power.

*Risen with Him we upward move
Still we seek the things above ...*

*Soar we now where Christ hath led
Following our exalted Head.
Made like Him, like Him we rise
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies.*

Christ has conquered hell! Death has lost its sting! The grave is spoiled! What a Saviour! What a gospel! What a glorious hope!

Rev. Dr Herbert McGonigle



An Easter Prayer

"Happy Easter from the Bible Society. Christ is risen; He is risen indeed."

Lord Jesus, at this Easter-time, we pray that you will talk to us as you talked with Mary in the garden, breaking into our world in glory;

Share our lives as you shared breakfast with your disciples, filling us with purposes;

Walk with us as you walked on the road to Emmaus, so that our hearts burn within us at your words.

May your empty tomb fill us with hope and our meetings with you fill us with joy.

Amen

From 'Prayer in Action' published by the Bible Society

Christ the Lord is risen today! Alleluia!

Christ the Lord is ris'n today, Alleluia!
Sons of men and angels say, Alleluia!
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!
Sing, ye heav'ns, and earth, reply, Alleluia!

Lives again our glorious King, Alleluia!
Where, O death, is now thy sting? Alleluia!
Once He died our souls to save, Alleluia!
Where thy victory, O grave? Alleluia!

Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia!
Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia!
Death in vain forbids His rise, Alleluia!
Christ hath opened paradise, Alleluia!

Soar we now where Christ hath led, Alleluia!
Foll'wing our exalted Head, Alleluia!
Made like Him, like Him we rise, Alleluia!
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, Alleluia!

Hail the Lord of earth and heaven, Alleluia!
Praise to Thee by both be given, Alleluia!
Thee we greet triumphant now, Alleluia!
Hail the Resurrection, thou, Alleluia!

King of glory, Soul of bliss, Alleluia!
Everlasting life is this, Alleluia!
Thee to know, Thy pow'r to prove, Alleluia!
Thus to sing, and thus to love, Alleluia!

Charles Wesley

Charles Wesley, the co-founder of the Methodist movement, wrote "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today" in 1739 where it was initially titled "Hymn for Easter Day". He based it on an older anonymous Bohemian hymn titled "Jesus Christ Is Risen Today". The new hymn was first performed at the first service at The Foundery Meeting House after Wesley had adapted it into the first Methodist chapel. Following this, Wesley published it in the *Hymns and Sacred Poems* hymnal of 1739, initially with eleven verses of four lines each. The hymn was subsequently published in the hymnal *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People called Methodists*, and in 1754, it appeared in *Harmonia Sacra*, a hymnal compiled by Thomas Butts.

The hymn was later edited by Martin Madan for inclusion in his *Psalms and Hymns* hymnal (1769) by removing the seventh, eighth and ninth verses. The hymn eventually became popular in the Church of England from around 1780. Charles Wesley's brother, John Wesley excluded it from the Wesleyan Methodist Church's Wesleyan Hymn Book, which John did to preclude the inclusion of any specific seasonal hymns. It was not until 1831, when the Supplement to the Collection was published by an unknown Methodist, that "Christ the Lord is Risen Today" made it into the hymnals of the Methodist Church regularly. Prior to this hymn being published, church music had maintained a similar style of dynamics to music and chants from the Biblical period. "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today" was written as a more uplifting style of worship expressing personal feelings to God that eventually became the bedrock of Christian music into the modern era.

The composition of "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today" originally consisted of eleven verses of four lines, which were later reduced to six, and early in the 19th century "Alleluia" was added to the end of each line. This results in "Alleluia" appearing twenty-four times in the hymn. It is not known why this was done, but it is speculated by hymn analysts that it was to ensure that the hymn fit the "Easter Hymn" tune. [From Wikipedia.]

From the Editor

Welcome to the April 2022 edition of the *Hadleigh Messenger*.

Having been quite careful over the last two years, I finally succumbed to the COVID-19 virus and tested positive on 25th March. This meant that I missed a couple of Sunday services, including the Mothering Sunday service led by Heather, and I was unable to present a slideshow for Hadleigh Heritage at St James the Less Church on 2nd April. Andrew, one of our two sons who still live at home, also caught it – probably from me before I realised I was infected – but Heather and our clinically vulnerable son, Michael, have managed to avoid it.

The 'Family News' this month is not good news. The nephew of Susan Carman, a former member

of our congregation, has e-mailed to let us know that Susan passed away recently in Northern Ireland. A friend of the church, Ann Lowes, has also passed away. Added to this is the news that our former minister, Rev. Jack Roche, has been diagnosed with cancer. I would like to include some positive news so do let me know of anything good happening in your life or that of a family member.

There is some good 'church news' in that we will have a united Good Friday service this year (at St Michael's Church) and the Easter Day Sunrise Service at Hadleigh Castle is also returning. There's not much chance of catching COVID-19 at Hadleigh Castle but the 5.45am start time may put a few people off!

Malcolm Brown



Church Meeting – Thu 28th April

The first Church Meeting for over two years will be held on Thursday 28th April at 12.45pm. To facilitate greater social distancing, the meeting will be held in the church. Those members who normally attend the coffee morning are invited to bring a packed lunch to eat. This is a custom that we had adopted for several years before the pandemic arrived.

If there is anything specific that you would like to have discussed at the Church Meeting then please let one of the Elders know, preferably before 13th April, when the Elders are holding an Elders' Meeting.

Malcolm Brown



On Safari with the Mother-in-Law

A big game hunter went on a safari with his wife and mother-in-law. One morning, while still deep in the jungle, the hunter's wife awakened to find her mother gone. She woke her husband, and they both set off in search of her.

In a clearing not far from the camp, they came upon a chilling sight. The mother-in-law was standing face-to-face with a ferocious lion.

"What are we going to do?" his horrified wife asked.

"Not a lot," her husband replied. "The lion got himself into this mess, let him get himself out of it."

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

Family News

Susan Carman



Many readers will remember Susan, a former member of our congregation and of the Wives' Fellowship, who moved back to Northern Ireland in 2014 after her husband, Dick, died in 2013. Sadly, Susan passed away on 13th March. Her nephew Paul

McClinton kindly sent the following e-mail:

"I am sorry to be the bearer of sad news but our Aunt Susan has passed away. She always spoke fondly about her church in Hadleigh so I felt it would be appropriate to make you aware of her demise.

Since July 2021, Susan's health had deteriorated steadily, spending time in hospital from September until December. There were issues with her kidneys but nothing deemed medically acute. She moved into a private nursing home just before Christmas and was showing signs of improvement for a short while however she seemed to lose interest and was refusing to eat or drink. She was admitted to hospital again in February due to concerns about her heart.

She was discharged to the nursing home again at the end of February as there was really nothing clinically wrong, she just needed loving care. The family all live very close so she was never left alone and the nursing home staff were wonderful.

Susan passed away peacefully on the evening of Sunday 13th March with many family members in attendance. She had expressed the wish to have her remains scattered on the Isle of Man along with those of her late husband Dick and I will undertake that duty in a few weeks time."

We remember Susan with fondness and send our sincere condolences to Paul and other members of Susan's family.

Ann Lowes

Sadly, Ann passed away in Southend Hospital on the morning of Friday 1st April. She had been in our prayers for some time as she was suffering from dementia and other health problems but her quite sudden deterioration came as rather a shock. Ann worshipped at St Barnabas Church until quite recently, when failing health prevented it. Before the pandemic, she regularly attended our coffee morning and would also attend special events like our Anniversary Tea and Harvest Supper. She lived in The Avenue and was well-known locally. Ann was a devout Christian and gave a lifetime of service to the Lord. She will be missed.

Ann's funeral will take place at St Barnabas Church on Friday 29th April at 10.45am. This will be followed by a committal service in the main chapel at Southend Crematorium at 12 noon.

We give thanks for Ann's life of service to the Lord and send our condolences to her family.

URC News

New URC Deputy General Secretary for Mission appointed

Rev. Philip Brooks, the United Reformed Church's (URC) Secretary for Ecumenical & Interfaith Relations, has been appointed to serve as its Deputy General Secretary (Mission) for two years.



Philip takes up the role after Francis Brienen announced last year that she will be moving back to her home country of the Netherlands after 19 years' service to the denomination first as its Secretary for Mission and then as Deputy General Secretary (Mission).

Philip grew up at Radcliffe URC, a lively and big-hearted church in north Manchester. He benefited from the active youth work in his local church and later went on to be a Youth Leader and Elder, as well as enjoying the amateur dramatics which was a big part of the church. These skills worked out well when he was involved in two large Passion Plays in Bolton town centre.

Philip's ministerial formation training was at Northern College, where he was awarded an MA in Contextual Theology. He was then ordained in 2007 at Christ Church, Little Lever, a URC/Methodist LEP.

Alongside Christ Church, Little Lever, his first pastorate included a Methodist Chapel, as well as a 1662 former Presbyterian Church in Little Hulton, one of the poorest parts of Salford. The two Salford churches came together to form Wharton and Cleggs Lane, a URC/Methodist LEP, during Philip's ten-year ministry. This Easter, Wharton and Cleggs Lane will mark the opening of a new church and community centre.

Prior to being ordained into the URC, Philip served in and helped to establish the Bolton Town Centre Chaplaincy, which gave him valuable insights into how the church still has a welcome place in what many people view as an entirely secular world. It also grounded him in ecumenical and interfaith work in the multi-cultural setting of Bolton. He went on to chair and manage the chaplaincy and the associated Community Cohesion Project. He was also a trustee of Greater Manchester Industrial Mission.

Philip's interest in chaplaincy began with a first-year student placement in the Vulnerable Prisoners' Wing of Strangeways Prison. He also served as chaplain for local community radio station, Bolton FM, where he and his wife Debs had their own regular Sunday evening faith show.

In the URC North Western Synod, Philip was the ecumenical officer for Central Area and served on its Area Pastoral Committee.

In 2017, Philip took on the role of Secretary for Ecumenical & Interfaith Relation for the denomination. Because of the global Covid pandemic, he was part of the team that created yoURChurch, an online worshipping community.

As Deputy General Secretary for Mission, Philip says: "I hope to draw on my local church and Synod roots, linked to my passion for opening the church outwards to a world which still seeks God, but often fails to see the relevance of church.

"This two-year post will see an exciting period of transition for the URC and the work of the URC's talented mission team will be central to that transformation."

Philip is married to Debs, a primary school teacher, and they have two children and a grandchild.

Award-winning community church starts new project



With a long history of supporting local people in need, Lea Road Community Church's latest venture comes as

no surprise. A lottery grant of more than £200,000 has enabled the church to establish Together In Penn Fields, a project designed to develop its existing work and meet the needs of new and emerging communities in the Penn Fields area of Wolverhampton.

Set up in December 2021, the project runs an array of activities: youth clubs for children and young people; parenting and toddler groups in partnership with the Wolves Foundation Charity; adult education classes including basic skills training and interview techniques in partnership with Wolverhampton Adult Education; and groups for refugees and migrants.

Daniel Holmes, Project Coordinator, explains why, despite all that the church already does – its food project gained a Community Project Award last year – this project was set up.

“Lea Road serves a diverse community and people were struggling post Covid. We’ve got different rates of crime and young people need a safe space. Refugees, migrants and parents all needed somewhere. Lea Road has always been known for being a community church so we do what we can to help people and bring people together.”

The church does have a long history of meeting community needs. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, the then minister offered the unemployed a warm place to meet and find support; Mencap and Age concern launched support groups there in the 1960s; when others in the city were excluding young people from the Windrush generation, the church hosted a large youth club for them; it has and still works with refugees, and for nearly 11 years has run drop-ins for the city’s Roma communities.

“We have 16-18 children every week attending our youth groups,” continues Daniel. “We started with nine and they’re bringing their friends who are telling others and the club is growing and growing. There are nine-15 families dropping in each week with their 0-11-year-olds, 15-20 young people of secondary school age using the youth groups, and people coming in to learn basic English and more. It really is exciting and all free. Post Covid, our project has come just at the right time.”

Ministers show support for Ukraine with tattoos

In a show of support for those in and fleeing Ukraine, United Reformed Church ministers, Revs. Alex and Jo Clare-Young have had tattoos of peace symbols inked onto their skin. The move was in response to a Ukrainian tattoo artist’s appeal on Instagram. Katy, a Ukrainian member of the team at Inked Moose Tattoo Art Studio in Milton Keynes, launched a campaign following the devastating Russian invasion.

Katy, who still has family living there, invited people to visit the studio on 28 February, to get a small tattoo that represented either Ukraine or peace. All the money from tattoos that day was donated directly to Ukraine. Several other artists in the area joined her.

Alex, who is soon to be inducted as Pioneer Minister in Cambridge city centre, said:

“Originally the plan was that I would get a tattoo done, but when I picked Jo up from her pastoral group meeting, where they had been talking about Ukraine and the tattoo project, Jo decided to get one too. The tattoo artists were very amused and pleased that Jo [Minister of Newport Pagnell and West End] came in her clerical collar.

“My tattoo is the peace sign, which was designed by Gerald Holtom in the face of nuclear war, who said, citing Francisco Goya’s ‘The Third of May



1808’: ‘I was in despair. Deep despair. I drew myself: the representative of an individual in despair, with hands palm outstretched outwards and downwards in the manner of Goya’s

peasant before the firing squad. I formalised the drawing into a line and put a circle round it.’

“Jo’s tattoo is a dove for peace. We both got tattoos in visible places, as we feel our convictions, as ministers, should be visible. The fee we paid goes directly to a network of families and friends of those in Ukraine, who are then able to directly purchase the goods they need. We felt this was an effective alternative to charity donation, which has immediate benefits. Katy also hoped that when she sent the pictures of people’s tattoos to her family in Ukraine they would feel the tangible, visible support of people across the world.”

Huddersfield church gains silver Eco Church award

Moldgreen United Reformed Church in Huddersfield has recently been awarded Silver Eco Church status by the A Rocha UK.

The church was kickstarted into action when Elder Kevan Shuttleworth, a vegan cyclist, nature lover and champion of all things eco, led Moldgreen’s first eco worship session and a series of workshops to help the church recognise and understand the need for change.

Kevin became the church’s “eco warrior” encouraging all in the fellowship and recording their progress with A Rocha.

Moldgreen URC is also indebted to the hard-working worship group, who worked with the church’s minister, Rev. Sarah Fitton, to achieve the worship and teaching aspects of the Eco Church requirements.

A history of Easter feasts

Easter is the principal festival of the Christian year. Both Easter and its long prelude Lent have traditions associated with food. Lent is traditionally a time of giving up food, especially meat and dairy. Easter is, by contrast, a feast.

Versions of simnels (high-quality bread), decorated eggs, pancakes, and roast lamb can all be found in medieval European culture. Whether hot cross buns come from the same period is open to question. Some argue that hot cross buns come from St Albans buns, apparently invented by the monk of St Albans Thomas Rockcliffe in the mid-14th century.

From around the seventh century, prayers in the north Italian monastery of Bobbio, founded by the Irish monk Columbanus, blessed lamb eaten for Easter lunch. Two centuries later, roast lamb at Easter had been adopted more widely by the papacy, the leaders of the Catholic church.

Lamb for Easter feasts

Lamb was certainly a meat with specific links to the festival, but traces of other foodstuffs now associated with Easter and Lent can also be found in the period. A good example is simnels – not the almond cake but a very high-quality wheat loaf, known across medieval Europe. Medieval bread came in many different forms and qualities. Simnels as white wheat bread were at the top of the pile.



Medieval Easter supper
from The Hague medieval illuminated manuscripts, CC BY

During Lent, medieval society operated within a system of dietary regulation set by the church. This involved abstinence from meat on particular days, for example, Fridays and periods before major church festivals. Fish was therefore important for Lenten diets, for those that could afford it. Of especial importance was the range of dried sea fish that formed one of the mainstays of the northern European economy.

Drying (stockfish) and salting were the two principal methods of preservation, with herring and cod the dominant species. Freshwater fish including trout, pike and, in some cases, sturgeon seem to have been served in elite households. Large fish such as sturgeon also feature in many stories of the saints, for example Anselm of Canterbury, (1033-1109) and Bernard of Clairvaux (1091-1153).

The Lenten fast also banned dairy. The beginning of Lent was marked gastronomically by Shrove Tuesday, perhaps more familiar as Pancake Day, where people used up their stocks of eggs and animal fat. Less known is Collop Monday, an occasion to eat up preserved meats such as bacon in slices – collops. Take the two together and you have bacon and eggs, the origin, perhaps, as historian Chris Woolgar suggests, of the “English” breakfast.

Although eggs were not allowed during the Lenten fast, ingenious medieval chefs created confectionery alternatives. A fascinating recipe for “eggs in Lent” is recorded in the British Library, from about 1430.

“Take eggs and blow out their insides through the other end. Then wash the shell clean in warm water; take good almond milk and set it on the fire, and take a fair cloth and pour the milk onto it and let the water run through. Then take the residue on the cloth and gather it together in a dish and add enough sugar to it. Then take half and colour it with a little saffron, and also add ground cinnamon. Then take some of the ‘white’ (the uncoloured mixture) and put it in the lower end of the shell, and put the ‘yolk’ (the coloured mixture) in the middle, and fill up the shell with (the remaining) white – but not too full in case it runs over. Then set it in the fire and roast it, and serve.”

Moderation and feasting

Easter day was the end of 40 days of moderation and restraint and the moment when flesh and dairy could be consumed again. An example comes from 1290 and the celebrations of the bishop of Hereford, Richard Swinfield, at his manor at Colwall, about 20 miles from Hereford. Unusually for the period, we have a full set of accounts for his household for 1289-90.

The accounts show the amount of hay required for horses, allowing an estimate of at least 70 guests for the feast. Preparations include an unquantified amount of bread and ale and 11 sextaries of wine (about 66 gallons). And then, two and a half carcasses of salt beef, a bacon, two boars, one live ox, two fresh beef carcasses, five pigs, six calves, 27 lambs, 12 capons, 148 pigeons, three fat deer, milk, cheese, flour, suet, three bushels of salt and 4,000 eggs.

Richard Swinfield's Easter feast includes, as we should expect, lamb, which was almost certainly roasted. A near-contemporary recipe (now in the British Library) details how to prepare a roasted lamb – filled with spices and ginger.

“Instructions for roasting kid in its skin. Take the kid and slaughter it; scald like a young hog, clean and dress it; then put it on a spit; in it,

put fine spices and a good filling made with the same spices, adding saffron and salt; then put it to roast; when it is hot, lard it with long lardoons; when it is cooked, remove it from the spit and serve it with the filling and good ginger.”

And while chocolate eggs had no place in the Middle Ages, decorated eggs did. A very early example comes from Edward I of England, who, according to his household accounts, spent some 18 pence on 450 eggs decorated with gold leaf or dyed. This was for Easter in 1290 when these eggs were offered to the royal household. There were, however, definitely no Easter bunnies.

Giles Gasper

Professor in High Medieval History, Durham University.
Published on www.theconversation.com on 5 April 2022



Prayer Reflection – Vindication

Consider what the Resurrection meant for Jesus. Being fully human, albeit with an extremely close contact with God the Father, he must have had some uncertainty whether his suffering and sacrifice would achieve the salvation intended. Without that uncertainty there would have been no temptation to look for other ways to bring the good news of God's love and forgiveness. Stand in awe at the foot of the cross recognising that Jesus accepted it despite his fears and uncertainty. The Resurrection vindicated his trust in the Father and restored him to his rightful place in the godhead. Ask for similar trust in God for our life and times.

Contemplate what the Resurrection means for all of us. It shows that God can be trusted with all aspects of our lives, the good, the bad and the simply mediocre. He remains in control and all his promises are true and will be kept. Jesus promised to be with us always and taught that God will listen when we talk to him about anything. Realise what a privilege it is to be able to approach God with all our worries and concerns however small or large. It is only through Jesus death that we can come and through the Resurrection that we know that we can approach God whatever our needs. Praise God for his gracious invitation to accept his offer of forgiveness and become his sons and daughters in Christ. May we have the grace to accept.

Celebrate the joy and peace of mind this acceptance brings. Study all the promises God has made that are recorded throughout the Bible. Remember that he is still active today and will guide and support us in whatever situation we find ourselves. We have but to ask. Pray for the grace to share the joy and peace he gives us with those around us so that they, too, will find faith and enjoy 'life in all its fullness'. Thank God for the opportunities he provides and pray for wisdom in speaking to others.

Prayer

Thank you Lord for assuring us of your truth through the Resurrection. May we always remember we can trust your loving care in all circumstances. May we have the grace to hear and heed your voice and so be strengthened to serve you well and live at peace with all we meet. *Amen*

Beryl Hunt

Eastern Synod Meeting held on 12th March 2022

The latest Eastern Synod meeting took place on 12th March 2022. The meeting was held online on Zoom owing to the high level of COVID-19 cases. 101 people were recorded as being in attendance. This report, covering selected items, is based on the minutes of the meeting available at <http://www.urch-eastern.org.uk/synod-meetings>.

Opening – The meeting was chaired by Rev. Lythan Nevard, the Moderator of Eastern Synod. The opening worship was led by Rev. Ken Forbes, Minister of Lion Walk URC in Colchester (the original venue for the meeting).

Ministerial movements – Lythan welcomed Rev. Tom Osborne and Rev. Stephen Yelland as new members of Synod together with other members present for the first time.

Minutes of last meeting – The minutes of the Synod Meeting held on 9th October 2021, at Plume Avenue URC in Colchester, were agreed and signed as a correct record.

Deployment update – A Task Group had been working to find ways of offering Ministry so that all were enabled to offer the best ministry possible within the Synod. A visit had been made to the East Midlands Synod to learn more about their model, and a plan would follow.

Members of the Task Group were: Paul Ellis, Rick Merkle, Liz Caswell, Jo Patel and the Moderator. They were looking for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and planning plenty of consultation across the Synod as they looked for deployment principles and criteria for vacancies, and requested prayer for their task

Digital Worship video – This was presented by the new Minister for Digital Worship, Rev. Andy Braunston, who spoke of the many ways in which the URC's Daily Devotion programme could assist churches and individuals. Churches without digital capability could also benefit. The Moderator commended this resource, for which there was a link on the Synod website. Small grants could be applied for to help with technical matters in churches.

Being an Eco Church – The Moderator spoke to the Paper on this topic, particularly highlighting the Aspirations – things that all can do to take being an Eco Synod seriously.

Clifford Patten spoke about Building Sustainability and 'how we do it'. Church buildings were a great spiritual resource and are

generally safe and suitable for what is done in them. Most, though, were not built for current times and standards and contribute to climate change. Churches needed to consider the energy their buildings used, how they were maintained, and the whole was a fundamental part of the problem, requiring fairly complex solutions.

Being an Eco Church and Synod was a challenging target which the Synod was keen to address. Moderators have set the target of carbon emission reduction by 75% by the end of 2030 compared with 1990.

It would involve investment of time and money, which needed to be focussed on buildings which fully serve our purposes. Churches were asked to consider questions:

- Do we need / what is the point of having our own building?
- Is the location still ideal for 'us'? Are we still in the right place for the community?
- Is keeping the building still economically viable?
- Think about the layout, facilities and flexibility of use.
- What do the buildings say about 'us' to the community?
- What do they offer to the community?
- Do the buildings facilitate passing on the faith?

Jeremy Flack, Synod Green Advocate, spoke about the help available to churches and was willing to assist with various related matters.

The role of the Eldership in mission and worship – The Moderator spoke of the great treasure that is the Elders, being a positive influence in the mission, witness and service of the Church. She quoted from the booklet, 'They've asked me to be an Elder', and spoke of the changing role with its new challenges over time, and the stretching of resources. Yet, as members of the URC originate from a mix of denominations, she realised that not all understood the Eldership and what it is all about.

She asked a few questions about what the Basis of Union has to say about Elders – that their top three responsibilities were mission, worship and pastoral care (also top for Church Meeting) and how so often meetings are top heavy with business, buildings and finance.

Lythan suggested churches try to focus on the top three to begin with and then the others at a subsequent meeting. She recommended the 'Resourcing our Elders' pack.

Various questions were raised and answers offered; some were concerned about the workload and leadership expectations of ministers at present.

Mission Committee report – presented by Rev. Trevor Hahn. Trevor and the committee were grateful for all the mission questionnaire responses received and the report provided a summary of those responses with many ideas for future mission. There was some overlap on the earlier question of the purpose and place of our buildings. Churches struggling with their mission were encouraged to ask for help from Lindsey Brown and Nicola Grieves.

Trevor asked if there were opportunities for mission that don't need our buildings. His challenge was to see if there were things God was asking us to let go of. Were we inviting people to come to church each week? He listed some resources available, including training courses.

Executive Committee report – presented by Keir Hounsome. The closure of Trinity URC in Harlow was noted with sadness. Keir drew attention to the steps put in place to maintain pastoral care of the congregation. The Moderator referred to the need to extend Keir's role as Synod Clerk for a short period in order to enable the recruitment of a successor. Synod agreed the extension of Keir Hounsome's role as Synod Clerk until 30th June 2022 or if a successor is in place by an earlier date then to that date.

Pastoral Committee report – presented by Rev. Paul Ellis. Paul firstly spoke about deployment. The group that had met with those from East Midlands Synod were fewer in number due to Covid ill-health, but a Zoom meeting would take place to further the discussions, with elders from one or more East Midland churches talking about how the Resource Church Model works for them. The target figures for deployment in each Synod originate from Ministries Committee; adjustment brings the target for Eastern Synod up from 27 to 28 for the end of 2022. This target will be met by retirements, but decisions would need to be made about which pastorate or two to 'declare' – vacancies would not be declared simply in chronological order; some pastorates may be altered and Area Partnerships may be crossed.

Paul then referred to Ministers' pastoral supervision with a reminder to ministers to set this up for themselves, and to churches that they were financially responsible. Paul also took the opportunity to express gratitude for the work of Lay Preachers and all worship leaders in churches.

Resources Committee report – presented by Gil Heathcote. Synod received the reports of the Synod Administration Fund and Church Life and Mission Fund. The Moderator then spoke to the item on Ministry and Mission contributions and the proposal from Witham United Reformed Church that the contribution process within the Synod should be planned on the basis that 25% of the amount raised within the Synod for 2023 and for the foreseeable future thereafter will come from Synod funds with the remaining 75% being raised as at present. Ian Hardie also spoke to the proposal on behalf of Witham, with both he and Gil declaring interests as members of the church and, in Ian's case, also as URC Treasurer. Lythan also explained that it was not intended to discuss the proposal at this meeting but rather to consult with churches with a view to an informed decision being made at the October meeting. Her experience of four different Synods found quite a variety of methods used for calculation and efficacy. She believed in the system as a whole – that all churches pay into the pot the amount they feel they can afford, so those with more income support those with less. It was recognised that it was now harder for all churches to feel fairly treated.

Lythan reminded churches that their contribution was not a levy but a pledge to consider what they can afford. It is a "first call" on a church's finances but is not intended to "break" a church. She thanked churches for their generosity on behalf of the Synod and the whole URC and reminded them that the M&M Advocates are available to listen and help. Letters will be sent to churches over the following fortnight.

Closing – Closing worship was led by the Children's and Youth Synods and recorded at their recent gathering at Westminster College. It was introduced by Nicola Grieves who also shared a joyous statement from the recent Youth Assembly who had been delighted to meet again after two years. The Moderator thanked the children and young people for the worship. She then closed the meeting.

Malcolm Brown

Chapter & Verse – from Reform, April 2022

‘...On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations...’ – *Revelation 22:1-5*

We were recently on a car journey when Toby, our six-year-old, quite out of the blue, remarked: ‘I really hope God makes the new earth tomorrow.’ My husband and I looked at each other, slightly puzzled, but realised he must have picked up his moment of inspired eschatological reflection from a recent Sunday morning service.

At Woking URC we have been on a ‘Journey Through the Bible’ over the last six months. We have a big wooden timeline, inspired by the Bible Society’s Bible Course, and week by week we have placed books of the Bible onto it as we’ve recounted the stories of our faith and sought to understand more deeply how they fit together in God’s salvation plan.

As the last book, Revelation, was placed on the timeline, we thought about how we are living in the gap between the end of Acts and the new heaven and new earth envisaged by John on the island of Patmos.

It’s an awkward place to live. Here in this ‘gap’ we are faced with a world where innocent, peace-loving people are forced from their homes because of the threat of violence. A place where a staggering one in three health care facilities worldwide don’t have somewhere for doctors and nurses to wash their hands. A world where disease can ravage bodies and...

The beauty of this vision in these verses is hard to picture right now in this broken and dark world. Can we even begin to imagine this image of a new creation where, from the throne room of God, flows a river through the city, and the tree of life is there... and the leaves of the trees are for the healing of the nations?

Here in this vision we are taken back to the very beginning of our Bible, to Genesis, where we witness the separation of heaven and earth, and a garden which had a tree at its centre. We are reminded how much of the Old Testament is about the search of people to be reunited to God, and their constant failure to do it in their own strength.

This story reaches its conclusion in Revelation with another tree in a new city. Earth and heaven are reunited again God’s good creation is made whole again.

It’s a beautiful picture of restoration where God’s perfect earth, created right back at the beginning of scripture, is made new by God. We are shown how that which God created in love will one day be perfectly restored: there will be a coming together of heaven and earth.

It will be a place where there is no more sorrow or war, where the lion will lie down with the lamb, where people ‘from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages’, as chapter 7 puts it, will worship before the throne of God. Nations and borders will be irrelevant; there will be a beautiful anthem of praise being sung in perfect harmony in every language on earth.

But of course, this vision only makes any sense because of Jesus, who himself died on a tree. By his sacrificial death and glorious resurrection, that chasm between heaven and earth was restored. Jesus’ resurrection is the first fruit of that new reality. He has gone ahead of us into that future where death is no more. It will be the final climax of the kingdom which was inaugurated by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

As we continue to live life in the gap – in what is often described as the ‘now and the not yet of the Kingdom’ – the vision of Revelation gives us hope. I heard it described recently as being like watching your favourite team on Match of the Day but knowing the final score in advance. In that situation, one can watch with confidence. We do not live as people without hope; we know that God will triumph.

The question is, how to live out that hope in the here and now – in the gap?

I loved our son’s hope that God would ‘make the new earth tomorrow’. But what we said to Toby was that, while we wait for that day, we are called to live out the life of the new heaven and new earth right now. We told him that because Jesus showed us what it would be like by giving us a foretaste of the ‘no more tears place’ through his own life of love, our calling is to follow him and his ways. We are to point the world towards him in the here and now until, one day, in his good time, he will bring it to fruition and Christ will be ‘all in all’.

Lucy Brierley

Minister of Woking URC

Computer Corner

Christ the Lord is Risen Today – Charles Wesley

Interesting video

A rather splendid rendition of Charles Wesley's Easter hymn performed at the Myers Park United Methodist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina in 2016. Watch it on Easter Day and be uplifted!

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=15dmjnB8FZU>

Falklands War chronology

Interesting article

Reporting of the 40th anniversary of the start of the Falklands War on 2nd April recently brought the events of that conflict back into our consciousness again. This article provides a simple timeline of events.

URL: <https://www.thehistorypress.co.uk/articles/the-falklands-war-a-chronology-of-events>

PortableApps platform

Useful free software

I first mentioned the PortableApps platform back in 2015. As a devoted user, I thought it was worth mentioning again. The PortableApps.com Platform is a system that lets you select and install your own standalone, custom suite of free applications (programs) for use on a desktop PC, laptop, USB flash drive (memory stick), or cloud drive. There are hundreds of apps available including replacements for commercial applications, e.g. the Microsoft Office suite of applications (Word, Excel etc.) can be replaced by the excellent LibreOffice suite whose interface is very similar. One big advantage of the Portable Apps platform is its simple facility to check for, and install, updates to all the apps in your custom suite. I maintain my suite of portable apps on my main desktop PC and then occasionally copy them to a memory stick so they are available wherever I go.

Download from: <http://portableapps.com>

Word Search – Classical composers

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WHAT'S ON

A round-up of future events in the area

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| Sat 9 Apr 2022 | - Rayleigh Brass concert at SA Hadleigh Temple. Doors open 6.30pm for 7.00pm. Tickets £10.00, conc. £8.00. Phone 07939 228052 for tickets. |
| Tue 12 Apr 2022 | - Happy Feet Walking Group - 90-minute circular walk around the Hadleigh Farm estate. Meet at The Hub café, Chapel Lane, Hadleigh. Starts at 1.00pm. Held every Tue. All welcome. No need to book. |
| Wed 13 Apr 2022 | - Coffee Morning at St Michael's Church, Daws Heath, from 10.30am to 11.45am. Held every Wed. |
| Fri 15 Apr 2022 | - Churches Together Good Friday Service at St Michael's Church, Daws Heath. Starts at 10.30am. Refreshments incl. hot-cross buns afterwards. |
| Sun 17 Apr 2022 | - Easter Day Sunrise Service at Hadleigh Castle. Starts at 5.45am. |
| Thu 21 Apr 2022 | - Poetry Reading Group at Hadleigh Library from 2.30pm to 3.30pm. Every third Thursday of the month. All welcome. |
| Fri 22 Apr 2022 | - Benfleet Art & Craft Club at Hadleigh Methodist Church from 1.00pm to 3.30pm every Friday. Established 1945. New members welcome. |
| | ditto - Craft & Knitting Club at Hadleigh Library, 12.30pm to 2.30pm every Friday. Meet others who are passionate about craft and enjoy a chat. |
| Fri 29 Apr 2022 | - Fish & Chip Lunch at St Michael's Church at St Michael's Church, Daws Heath. Cost £4. To book, phone Sue Croucher on 07902 463829. |
| Sat 14 May 2022 | - Coffee Morning at Hadleigh Methodist Church from 10.00am to 12 noon with drinks, cakes and bric-a-brac stall. Every 2 nd Sat. |
| | ditto - Thames Estuary Lacemakers Lace Day at Hadleigh Baptist Church from 10.30am to 3.30pm. See how lace is made or have a go yourself! |
| | ditto - Beat & Beans Café at St James the Less Church from 10.30am to 12.30pm. Live music with coffee, tea and snacks. Free admission. |
| | ditto - Coffee Morning & Book Sale at St Peter's Church Thundersley from 10.30am to 12.30pm. Every 2 nd Sat. |
| Sat 28 May 2022 | - Hadleigh & Thundersley Community Archive Drop-In at Hadleigh Library. Bring along old photos and documents for scanning, chat about your memories of the area. Books for sale. From 10.30am to 12 noon. |
| Sun 5 Jun 2022 | - Queen's Platinum Jubilee Picnic in the Park at John Burrows Recreation Ground from 11.00am to 4.00pm. |
| Sat 11 Jun 2022 | - Hadleigh Gardening Association Summer Show at Hadleigh Methodist Church Hall. Viewing from 2.00pm to 4.00pm. Refreshments and raffle. |
| Sun 12 Jun 2022 | - Rayleigh Trinity Fair in Rayleigh Town Centre from 11.00am to 4.00pm (main stage). Windmill open from 10.30am to 4.30pm. |
| Sat 18 Jun 2022 | - Hadleigh Heritage presentation 'A Padgett Postcard Local Tour' by Malcolm Brown at St James the Less Church at 11.00am. Doors open at 10.30am for refreshments. Admission £3.00. |
| Sat 25 Jun 2022 | - Southend Symphony Orchestra Centenary Concert at SA Hadleigh Temple incl. Rachmaninov Piano Concerto No.2. Starts at 7.30pm. Tickets £12.00, concessions £10.00, available at the door. |

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