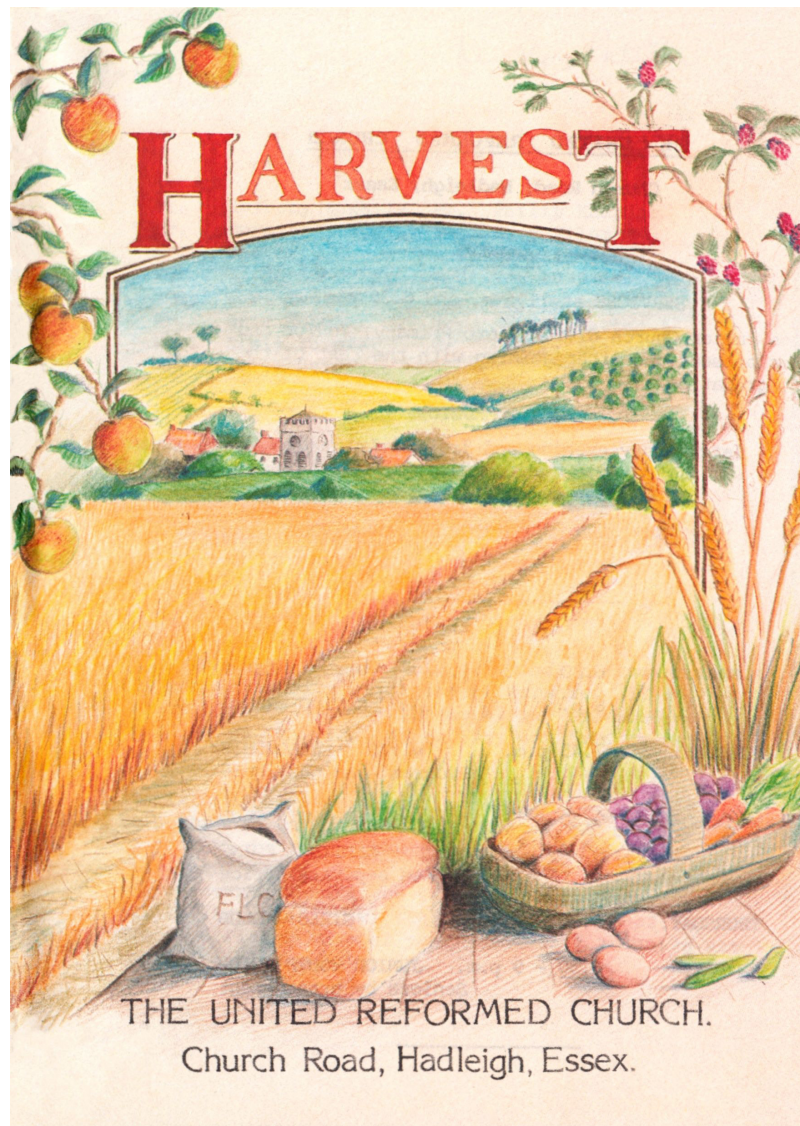


THE HADLEIGH MESSENGER

July - September 2023



SUNDAY SERVICES

Morning service starts at 10.30am

For more information about services,
please phone 01702 557678

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 16th 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. At Hadleigh URC, the Elders' Meeting is held monthly and the Church Meeting every other month. The church is part of the Eastern Synod, which meets twice a year. It also belongs to the South Essex Area Partnership (SEAP), a group of local URC churches that meets twice a year to share news etc. The General Assembly, the URC's main decision-making body, meets once a year.

<p>HADLEIGH URC OFFICERS</p> <p>Minister: Rev. Andrew Birch (01702 338674)</p> <p>Hon. Secretary: Mrs Heather Brown (01702 557678)</p> <p>Hon. Treasurer: Mr Malcolm Brown (01702 557678)</p> <p>Elders: (* denotes Serving Elder) Mrs Heather Brown* Mr Malcolm Brown* Miss Jean Reeve* (01702 554907) Mrs Mary Milne</p> <p>Elders 'emeritus': Rev. Peter Brewer, Mr Royston Brackin</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>USEFUL INFORMATION</p> <p>Address: 1 Church Road, Hadleigh, Benfleet, SS7 2DQ Website: www.hadleighessexurc.org.uk URC website: www.urc.org.uk</p> <hr/> <p>URC Eastern Synod Office contact info:</p> <p>Address: Synod Office, The United Reformed Church, Whittlesford, Cambridge, CB2 4ND Tel no: 01223 830770 E-mail: eastern.admin@urc.org.uk Website: www.urc-eastern.org.uk</p> <hr/> <p>An invitation...</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.</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 strict confidence.</p>
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PREACHING ARRANGEMENTS FOR JULY 2023

Sun 2 nd Jul	10.30am	Morning Service	Mr Adrian Tinning
Sun 9 th Jul	10.30am	Morning Service	Mrs Heather Brown
Sun 16 th Jul	10.30am	Morning Service with Holy Communion	Rev. Andrew Birch
Sun 23 rd Jul	10.30am	Morning Service	Keith & June Berry
Sun 30 th Jul	10.30am	Morning Service	Mrs Heather Brown

PREACHING ARRANGEMENTS FOR AUGUST 2023

Sun 6 th Aug	10.30am	Morning Service	Mr Adrian Tinning
Sun 13 th Aug	10.30am	Morning Service	Mr Adrian Tinning
Sun 20 th Aug	10.30am	Morning Service with Holy Communion	Mrs Heather Brown
Sun 27 th Aug	10.30am	Morning Service	Rev. Dr Jim Tarrant MA MTh

PREACHING ARRANGEMENTS FOR SEPTEMBER 2023

Sun 3 rd Sep	10.30am	Morning Service	Mr Adrian Tinning
Sun 10 th Sep	10.30am	Morning Service	Mrs Heather Brown
Sun 17 th Sep	10.30am	Morning Service with Holy Communion	Rev. Dr Jim Tarrant MA MTh
Sun 24 th Sep	10.30am	Morning Service (Harvest Festival)	Keith & Joyce Berry

ELDERS' MEETING

Thu 7th Sep 12.45pm

CHURCH MEETING

Thu 5 Oct 12.45pm

FLOWERS (JULY-SEPTEMBER)

Sun 16 th Jul	June Gargrave - in memory of her mother's birthday
Sun 13 th Aug	Jean Reeve - in memory of her parents' wedding anniversary
Sun 20 th Aug	Vera Knapton - in memory of mother Eleanor Jones' birthday (23 rd Aug)
Sun 3 rd Sep	June Gargrave - to mark her 70 th wedding anniversary (5 th Sep)

Harvest Festival – 23rd & 24th September 2023



Our Harvest Festival weekend begins with a Harvest Supper in the Small Hall on Saturday 23rd September at 6.00pm. Food will be provided but there will be a retiring offertory to cover costs. After the supper, there will be entertainment in the church.

Our Harvest Festival service will take place at 10.30am on Sunday 24th September and will be led by Keith and Joyce Berry from Christ Church Rayleigh URC.

Donations of food items, either fresh or preserved (dried, tinned etc.), may be brought to the Harvest Supper or to the service. Fresh items will be donated to Little Havens Hospice in Daws Heath and preserved items will be donated to the Castle Point Food Bank.

Malcolm Brown

From the Minister – Faith and Faithfulness

Dear friends,

Love God, and love your neighbour too.

Here's what a neighbour ought to do...

A man was mugged, and left to die.

Two priests ignored him, passing by,

but luckily the desperate man

was seen by a Samaritan

a race the Jews had come to hate

who stopped to help him. 'Bear up, mate!

I'll sort you out -- get on my steed!

A neighbour not in name, but in deed...

Whilst I was at Grays URC earlier in the year, when Dave Coaker was preaching at Kings Road, I was able to send them our Christian Greetings, from Hadleigh and Kings Road URCs.

As I was preaching, I found myself speaking about the acronym WWJD, 'What would Jesus do?' Although I am sure this has been and continues to be a helpful question, I would want to ask, 'What did Jesus do and what did Jesus say, as it is recorded in the Gospels?'

And what would it be like if he really meant what he said? What would it be like if we were a neighbour in name as well as in deed?

The central act of our faith is our collective worship, which can simply be described as acknowledging God and the giving of our very selves to God and to others.

The key to this is giving to others without expecting anything in return. This is called sacrificial giving. If we are reaching out to others for the sole purpose of recruiting new members or for our ultimate survival, then we have got it all the wrong way round.

We exist simply to offer the opportunity for people to hear the good news of Jesus Christ and to give unconditional service to others. Who knows what could happen?

May we continue to be neighbours in name and in deed!

With all good wishes, and every blessing,

Andrew



Prayer Reflection – Time to Pause

Pause and relax. Know you are in God's hands. Ponder your position within the church. Does what you do fill you with joy and help you feel alive? If so, thank God for his gifting and for the opportunity of such service. Perhaps what you do feels more like a burden to be endured. If so, discuss with God what has gone wrong. It maybe that someone else is better equipped to do the job and that God has other things in mind for you and equipped you for them. Pray for wisdom and sensitivity on the matter. Should it be that you don't consider you have any role at all, ask God to show you the plans he has for you. Praise him for his care for everyone including you.

Prepare for change. Growth requires change. For a seed to become a flower or a caterpillar a butterfly radical change is necessary. So too with us. For some the changes will be smaller and for some they will be huge. Pray that we all have the will to adjust and the sensitivity needed to encourage those who have the greatest change to make. May we know God's will for us as individuals, church and community so that we work together for the good of all.

Place your life in God's hands and stand on his promise 'not to harm you but to give you hope and a future'. Know that we flourish and thrive as we encourage and enable others to flourish. Pray that we have the grace to shine as beacons of hope and light to those around us. May we show Christ to the nation.

Prayer – Thank you Lord for the ways we can rest in you. Grant us the grace we need to serve as your ambassadors to those with whom we come into contact. May we also know how best to support those who go further afield to take your truth to the nations. Thank you Lord. Amen

Beryl Hunt

From the Editor

Welcome to the July to September 2023 edition of the Hadleigh Messenger. Regular readers will be aware that a July & August edition never appeared and the date of publication of this magazine hardly qualifies it as a September edition. However, the magazine does provide an historical record of the life of the church so I have decided to encompass all three months. Thus, you will find lists of preachers for July and August and a flower rota covering all three months. I didn't extend this idea to the birthday list in the Family News section so apologies to those whose birthday has not been publicised.

I'm sorry that the magazine has been produced so late not only on this occasion but earlier in the year too. With hindsight, it would have been a good idea to at least produce a brief newsletter each month, at the start of the month! Even before I took over as Treasurer, it was a struggle to get the magazine out on time but it has proved even harder since then. I am still learning the ropes as Treasurer and recently 'attended' a webinar (online seminar) run by the Association of Church Accountants and Treasurers (ACAT) that covered some of the pitfalls in recording receipts and payments but not quite to the degree I would have liked.

I kept setting a timetable to complete this edition but things just kept cropping up (and still do). One of those things was COVID-19, which I caught and then passed on to Heather at the beginning of August. We were due to have a week's holiday in Dereham, Norfolk, starting on 1st August but that was cancelled and this meant that we also missed the christening of our granddaughter Beatrix on 6th August in Scarning Church, near to Dereham. Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, we have still not seen Beatrix.

Meanwhile, the church soldiers on, although the congregation is very small and severely lacking in men! Heather has done a good job in arranging preachers but has found herself preaching most months. We continue to be extremely grateful to Adrian Tinning, who early in the year agreed to preach on the first Sunday of each month. Adrian has not enjoyed good health this year but he has continued to support us.

Our Minister, Andrew, has also been unwell recently. Following an operation for kidney stones, he contracted an infection that resulted in two nights in hospital and he has been convalescing during September. Hopefully he will resume normal duties in October and we pray that he will be able to do so.

Another thing to crop up recently was an offer by Essex & Suffolk Water to replace our lead main water pipe with a plastic pipe free of charge. To everyone's surprise, it was discovered that the water supply to the manse is taken off the church supply so the lead pipework to the manse will also be replaced. We are fortunate that, because of the pipe situation, this will also be done free of charge. (The original plan was just to seal off the lead pipe and install a new run of plastic pipe to the church but that would have left the manse without water.) The work will probably take place in October and will take two or three days so, depending on the actual dates, there may be some disruption to normal activities at the church.

Our Harvest Festival weekend has arrived with the Harvest Supper taking place on Saturday 23rd September. The supper is one of the main events in the life of our church and I hope to include photographs in the October magazine. Our Harvest service will be led by Keith and Joyce Berry from Christ Church Rayleigh URC.

Hadleigh URC and Rayleigh URC have enjoyed good relations over the years and this continues. Both churches were served by Rev. Norman Kemp (cousin of Rev. John Ambrose) at different points in their past. Norman died in 2009, but his wife, Olive, died only recently having reached the age of 100 in February. Olive used to receive the Hadleigh Messenger and send news for inclusion but, sadly, her life in latter years was blighted by dementia, which affected her nature as well as her memory. To remember Olive, I've included a photo in the magazine taken when she made a surprise visit to an evening service at Hadleigh in July 2010. She had travelled from Okehampton to take part in Rayleigh's centenary celebrations.

As ever, contributions to the magazine would be gratefully received. If you've been somewhere interesting recently, why not write about it.

Malcolm Brown

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

Beatrix Tharby-Brown

Beatrix, the daughter of Graham and Claire and granddaughter of Malcolm and Heather Brown, was christened on 6th August at Scarning Church, near Dereham in Norfolk. Although Heather and Malcolm were unable to attend the christening owing to COVID-19, they have lots of photos including the one below of the special moment.



Proud parents and big sister Daisy watch intently as Beatrix is christened

We give thanks that Beatrix is thriving and pray that she will grow up to love the Lord.

Florrie Large

Florrie's daughter Sue writes:

"Mum is very well and each week we have been out and about finding all the elephants from the Herd in the City exhibition. They are all over the Southend area. Elephants are Mum's favourite animals so it has been particularly special for her. We only have the Leigh and Shoeburyness ones left to find. It has given her a real focus for our weekly trips out.



Florrie and daughter Sue with elephant in Southend High Street

In September they are bringing all the elephants together at Saxon Hall so we have tickets to go and see them there also.

A couple of months ago we planted some bedding plants in the care home garden. They are thriving and give Mum a brilliant focus as she goes out every day to dead head and water them.

Thank you for always remembering Mum. She really does appreciate it and so do I.

Kind regards, Sue and Florrie"

Thank you, Sue, for the news about your mum, to whom, as always, we send our love.

The Old Cottagers

The little cottage stood alone, the pride
Of solitude surrounded every side.
Bean fields in blossom almost reached the wall;
A garden with its hawthorn hedge was all
The space between. -- Green light did pass
Through one small window, where a looking-glass
Placed in the parlour, richly there revealed
A spacious landscape and a blooming field.
The pasture cows that herded on the moor
Printed their footsteps to the very door,
Where little summer flowers with seasons blow
And scarcely gave the eldern leave to grow.
The cuckoo that one listens far away
Sung in the orchard trees for half the day;
And where the robin lives, the village guest,
In the old weedy hedge the leafy nest
Of the coy nightingale was yearly found,
Safe from all eyes as in the loneliest ground;
And little chats that in bean stalks will lie
A nest with cobwebs there will build, and fly
Upon the kidney bean that twines and towers
Up little poles in wreaths of scarlet flowers.

There a lone couple lived, secluded there
From all the world considers joy or care,
Lived to themselves, a long lone journey trod,
And through their Bible talked aloud to God;
While one small close and cow their wants maintained,
But little needing, and but little gained.
Their neighbour's name was peace, with her they went,
With tottering age, and dignified content,
Through a rich length of years and quiet days,
And filled the neighbouring village with their praise.

John Clare

John Clare, a poet of the Romantic School, was born on 13 July 1793 at Helpston, near Peterborough. The son of a labourer, he began work on local farms at the age of seven. Though he had limited access to books, his poetic gift, which revealed itself early, was nourished by his parents' store of folk ballads. His first verses were much influenced by the Scottish poet James Thomson. Early disappointment in love – for Mary Joyce, the daughter of a prosperous farmer – made a lasting impression on him. In 1820, his first book, *Poems Descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery*, was published and created a stir. Clare visited London, where he enjoyed a brief season of celebrity in fashionable circles. He made some lasting friends, among them Charles Lamb, and admirers raised an annuity for him. That same year he married Martha Turner, the daughter of a neighbouring farmer.



From then on he encountered increasing misfortune. His second volume of poems, *The Village Minstrel* (1821), attracted little attention. His third, *The Shepherd's Calendar; with Village Stories, and Other Poems* (1827), though containing better poetry, met with the same fate. His annuity was not enough to support his family of seven children and his dependent father, so he supplemented his income as a field labourer and tenant farmer. Poverty and drink took their toll on his health. His last book, *The Rural Muse* (1835), though praised by critics, again sold poorly. Clare began to suffer from fears and delusions. In 1837, through the agency of his publisher, he was placed in a private asylum at High Beech, Epping, where he remained for four years. Improved in health and driven by homesickness, he escaped in July 1841. At the end of 1841 he was certified insane. He spent the final 23 years of his life at St. Andrew's Asylum, Northampton, writing some of his best poetry. Clare died on 20 May 1864. [Based on article on Britannica.com]

URC News

URC General Assembly

The 2023 United Reformed Church (URC) General Assembly took place from 30 June to 3 July at The Hayes Conference Centre in Swanwick. General Assembly papers can be viewed and downloaded from the URC website. The proceedings were livestreamed and recordings can be viewed on YouTube.

The General Assembly was chaired by the Moderator, Rev. Fiona Bennett. The Rev. Tim Meadows was elected Moderator for 2024-25.

At the closing worship, the Moderator for 2023-24, Rev. Dr Tessa Henry-Robinson, was inducted. Ordained in 2018, Tessa has responsibility for four congregations in the East London Group, a multi-culturally diverse constituency. She is the first Black/ethnically-minoritised woman to be inducted as Moderator so this is a proud moment in the life of the denomination.

Digital congregation receives its first members

yoURChurch, a United Reformed Church (URC) congregation which meets exclusively online, recently received its first members at a Communion service. At the service led by the Revd Clare Downing, Moderator of the North Western Synod, 11 people were received.



Lawrence Heath-Moore, Central Area Mission Mentor for North Western Synod, said the event “wasn’t without its humour”.

“The very idea that a church that lives entirely online can be a ‘local’ church is deliciously ironic, but all URC churches are quite appropriately, with our own church an honourable exception, geographically defined! So, a local church we are,” Lawrence said.

“The other irony is that, technically, only church members can agree at a church meeting to accept new members and of course, prior to the end of

the service, we didn’t have any church members to call a church meeting and agree that we were suitable people to accept into membership!”

Lawrence called the service a “key moment for the members” as well as for yoURChurch.

“It was a solemn moment, as well as one to celebrate: solemn because membership is a covenant commitment to share a common life as fellow-disciples in the church; one to celebrate because that was the moment yoURChurch became a local church within the URC.”

At its 2023 meeting, General Assembly received yoURChurch as a local church. Services take place on Sundays at 6.30pm. To learn more about yoURChurch, visit <https://yourchurch.uk>.

Westcliff URC building

Dance crew Diversity has opened a new dance studio in the former United Reformed Church building in Westcliff-on-Sea. Ashley Banjo and the group acquired the former Westcliff URC, near Leigh-on-Sea, last year. The church closed in 2018.

The studio will offer in-person and live stream dance classes for baby beginners all the way to adult professionals. The building is also available for hire for events.



Ashley Banjo with Anna Firth MP

At the opening day, the dance group and their families were greeted by Anna Firth, Southend MP.

Eastern Synod eco awards

Eastern Synod is celebrating after gaining prestigious awards for work towards helping to protect the environment. Eastern Synod has gained a Bronze Eco Synod award and the Synod Office a Silver one.

Helen Stephens, A Rocha UK's Church Relations Manager, noted the following: "As the Synod with the largest proportion of rural churches in the whole of the URC, this was no small achievement."

The journey to becoming an Eco Synod began in 2020 when the Synod's environmental policy was adopted, committing Eastern Synod to significantly reducing its carbon footprint. Since then it has divested from fossil fuels, embedded environmental issues into its mission and training, including having the climate as a key part of synod events, integrated sustainability into synod grants, works to improve the carbon footprint of manses, celebrates eco achievements of churches and has regular eco updates in synod newsletters.

The synod office was also awarded a silver eco church award where, for example, electric car charging points have been installed.

So far there are currently 49 churches registered with eco church in Eastern of which 20 have achieved awards including Emmanuel Church in Bungay which is one of only four URC churches to have achieved a gold award.

Rev. Alan Gaunt

The United Reformed Church (URC) was



saddened to learn of the death of Rev. Alan Gaunt at the age of 88. Alan was a URC minister and an internationally renowned hymn writer. Eighteen of his hymns are in Rejoice and

Sing, a collection of hymns and songs for the URC which he helped to shape and edit. His hymns reached beyond the URC and many Christians sing and will sing his words.

Alan also wrote the responses added to the Statement concerning the Nature, Faith and Order of the URC, which was approved by General Assembly in 1990 and is much more widely used now than the original version.

Born in Manchester in 1935, Alan attended Silcoates School, Lancashire Independent College and Manchester University, where he spent five years training for the Congregational ministry. He was ordained at Clitheroe in 1958 and married Winifred a week later. They had two children, Miriam and Paul. It was at Clitheroe, in the early 1960s, that Alan began writing hymns.

Alan served Congregational and United Reformed churches in different parts of the North of England with his final pastorate in Windermere, where Fred Kaan was a regular member of the congregation.

In 2000, Alan and Winifred retired to Little Neston in the Wirral, where he was Minister of Heswall URC from 1974 to 1985.

Along with Rejoice and Sing, Alan's hymns appear in Common Praise, 2000; Sing Praise, 2010; and the Canadian Common Praise, 1998.

Doreen Meredith

A house-bound woman who has managed to remain an active member of her church has gained a Certificate of Loyal & Devoted Service. Doreen Meredith joined the Chapel on a Hill in 1969 as a young mother of five when it was a Congregational chapel.



Doreen Meredith receives certificate

She soon started work as a Sunday school teacher and youth club leader and assisted the Chapel during school holiday clubs. Following the formation of the URC in 1972, Doreen was inducted as an Elder and became church secretary, a role she carried out until 2016.

Despite Doreen becoming less mobile over the years, her faith and support for The Chapel on the Hill never wavered. Peter Jackson, Church Secretary, said: "Doreen's prayer support is invaluable, as is her advice, and wisdom, all of which are freely given."

While the chapel holds afternoon face-to-face services, Doreen faithfully attends the weekly morning Sunday service held on Zoom and regularly hosts 'members and Elders meetings' in her home and contributes wisely at every meeting.

Doreen was thanked for her dedication and loyalty to Jesus and the band of believers in Sedlescombe for more than 50 years and was presented with a rose shrub and a certificate by Peter and his wife Marie.

Plant gardens – from Jul/Aug 2023 Reform magazine

Lindsay Sanderson reports on possible new directions in the life of the URC

‘Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf for in its welfare you will find your welfare.’ (Jeremiah 29:5-7)

Jeremiah writes to the exiles from Jerusalem who find themselves transplanted into Babylon. They have been uprooted from everything they know, nothing seems recognisable, but they are told to do some remarkably simple things: plant gardens, build houses, form relationships, and seek the good of the place that is now their home. They are not to look back but to plant a seed, so that once more, there will be a garden. Garden planting starts with that simple act of hope which is to plant a seed.

This letter has become the key biblical text for the United Reformed Church’s Church Life Review. The innate spiritual gift of the URC to serve the local communities in which we find ourselves is our response to the call to seek the welfare of the places in which God has set us. We may no longer recognise those places, given the rapid pace of social change, but our vocation remains to seek the welfare of the places God has set us.

The Church Life Review Group was asked by General Assembly 2021 to examine the structures, resources and work of the Church to enable us to respond faithfully to the challenges the Church faces. The group has consulted widely, and commissioned work on the theology of money, the experiences of the URC, the resources available to the United Reformed Church, and how we are using those resources.

Our work has given each member of the group greater insight into the life of the denomination. We have been struck that we have more significant financial resources available to deploy on the Church’s mission than many members of the Church may realise. However, these resources are not available uniformly across the Church, but are concentrated in particular areas, in part as a result of wider economic trends.

The group is clear that these resources should neither be deployed against some centrally directed strategy, nor simply used to subsidise existing activities. We see the Church facing a *kairos* moment where it has an opportunity to try different ways of being church, and bring new energy to its mission, empowering that innate charism (spiritual gift) to serve the local communities in which we find ourselves, responding to the call to seek the ‘welfare of the city’.



*‘We see the Church facing a *kairos* moment’*

As the work of the present Church Life Review Group comes to a conclusion we commend a number of resources to the Church available from bit.ly/URCCLR:

‘Towards a URC Theology of Money’ offers personal perspectives on money to enable us to engage biblically and ethically, and from a global Church perspective, on how we might use our money. The resource is for small groups or individual use.

‘Local churches flourishing through good governance’ offers discussion material for congregations who might need to think about living a different way due to the demands of governance and compliance, and offers possible alternatives to simply closing a congregation.

‘The United Reformed Church: A paradoxical Church at a crossroads’ is the fruit of the research project undertaken in partnership with the think-tank Theos. Case studies from pastorates, synods and URC Youth map out what flourishing looks like in the URC and some of the barriers to flourishing. A copy of the report is being sent to every congregation for reflection on mission and ministry.

We are inviting General Assembly to affirm some of the key messages we have discerned from the wider Church. These include reaffirming that our innate charism is to serve our local communities, to recognise that the primary function of the structures of the Church is to support this, to reaffirm the place of synods and to restate that the wider Church should only do what it is not possible for the local to undertake.

We are recommending that General Assembly commissions work on effective resource-sharing across the Church; creates centres of expertise within the denomination, avoiding duplication, and making expertise more widely available to synods and local churches; creates a working group on new models of lay ministries in local churches; and authorises effective, proportionate management of this work.

God who gardens,
who enjoys the land and declares it to be good,
who revels in its diversity and delights in its abundance,
who invites us to share in the task of nurturing and cherishing the gardens of our lives and our churches,
we ask for energy and wisdom as we tend the land.
Amen.

Lindsey Sanderson

Lindsey is a URC minister and member of the Church Life Review Group.

The group's full report is available at urc.org.uk/general-assembly. You can contact the Church Life Review Group at churchlifereview@urc.org.uk

Remembering Olive Kemp

Olive Kemp, wife of former minister Rev. Norman Kemp passed away in the early hours of Saturday 19th August. Olive reached her hundredth birthday on 18th February but had been suffering from Alzheimer's for several years. Olive's funeral took place on Wednesday 6th September. A recording can still be accessed by logging on to <https://watch.obitus.com> with username yexa5785 and password 738646.

Norman and Olive were at Hadleigh part-time for two years from 1989 to 1991. Norman was introduced to the church by his cousin, Rev. John Ambrose. He was inducted at Hadleigh on 14th June 1989. Norman and Olive would spend two weeks in Lincolnshire and two weeks at Hadleigh, in the manse.

When Norman's ministry at Hadleigh ended in June 1991, he and Olive moved from Lincolnshire to Honiton. Norman served in a part-time capacity as Minister of the U.R.C. at Wellington, Somerset, for two years. They then moved to Exmouth, staying for nearly ten years before moving to Okehampton in Devon where Norman continued to preach. Olive was a member of the local Choral Society and demonstrated craft skills at various W.I.s in the area. Norman died on 5 April 2009.

Olive made a surprise visit to our evening service on 11 July 2010, when the photo below was taken.



R to L: Jim Webb, Irene Webb, Jean Hall (Rayleigh URC), Keith Gargrave, Enid Rundle, Royston Brackin, Marion Fidell, Susan Brackin, Avis Rundle, Olive Kemp, Heather Brown, June Gargrave.

Malcolm Brown

The sniff test is not reliable for food safety – here’s why

I should know better, but I admit that I do it too. I’ve just pulled some sliced chicken out of the fridge, as I set out to make up some sandwiches. I notice the chicken is within its use-by date, but I’m still suspicious. Another member of the family has unlovingly ripped open the packaging and the slices have been sitting exposed in the fridge for several days. Wondering if the chicken is still usable, I give it a good sniff, hoping for some evidence that it is still good or has gone off. I should know better because I’m a microbiologist, and I know that the microbes that I might be worried about making me sick have no smell. Yet, there I am, trying and failing to give myself confidence with the old sniff test.

It’s certainly true that some microbes create odours when they are growing. Favourites include the lovely smell of yeast in freshly risen or baked bread, which is in stark contrast to – and please excuse the toilet humour – the aversion we all have to the gaseous concoctions created by our microbes that come in the form of flatulence or bad breath.

These gases arise when microbial populations are growing and becoming abundant – when the metabolism of each microbial resident converts carbon and other elements into sources of energy or building blocks for their own cellular structure. However, the microbes that are most commonly associated with foodborne illness, such as *Listeria* and *Salmonella*, are going to be near impossible to pick up with the sniff test.

Even if present – and the risk is thankfully relatively low – these bacteria would probably be at such a small amount in the food that any metabolic action (and then odour production) would be entirely imperceptible to our noses. Also, any eau de *Listeria* would be indistinguishable from the minor odours that would be made by the more abundant microbial species that are common and expected to be on our foods, and which cause us no health concerns.

Yes, there’s a very small chance that *Listeria* may be present in the smoked salmon that I picked up at the coastal smokehouse last week. But absolutely no chance that my olfactory senses can detect any hints of *Listeria* over the delicious smells of the dill and salts and smoke that make up the product.

Back to my sandwich construction. There’s even less of a chance of smelling any *Salmonella* on

the tomato that I dug out from the fruit and veg drawer in the fridge – even if I had super *Salmonella*-smelling powers, which I don’t. If this pathogen was ever present on the tomato, it was probably introduced by contaminated water on the farm while the tomato was growing, so it is not on the surface of the tomato but within the tomato and doubly impossible to smell.

Spoiled food can smell, though

But it is possible to detect when food is spoiled – another action of microbes, as they eat away at food that has been left for too long or has been in the wrong storage conditions. This is one of the reasons why a more appropriate use of the sniff test is to suss out spoiled milk and help limit food waste, rather than throw out milk that might otherwise be safe. And for some foods – think of the microbial contribution to the finest cheeses – it is a culinary attribute to be malodorous.

While my wife disagrees with the aromatic attributes of some fermented foods, such as kimchi, and has banned them from the house, these are definitely not spoiled and should not be destined for the bin. Instead, for other foods, such as fresh fruits or vegetables or milk, I still pay heed to any odours suggestive of spoilage and take these as a warning to do a better job of storing that particular food type in the future – or to make less or buy less of it if I’m not eating it in time.

I also reflect that some of the causes of foodborne illness are still unknown to us. While many cases of illness are known to be caused by bacterial contaminants such as *Campylobacter* or the other microbes I’ve mentioned, there are just as many cases where we don’t yet know the source. But we’re getting better at this too, with scientists creating tools much more accurate than our nose at detecting food-borne pathogens.

So, if I’m ever worried about becoming sick from my food, my energies are best spent on storing them at the right temperature and cooking them for the right amount of time, rather than trusting my nose to sniff out a pathogen. I wouldn’t even trust my nose to tell the difference between a cabernet and shiraz, let alone a *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella*.

Matthew Gilmour

Dir., Food Safety Research Network, Quadram Institute.
Published on The Conversation website on 22 Aug 2023.

Computer Corner

Astronomy Picture of the Day

Interesting website

Each day a different image or photograph of our fascinating universe is featured, along with a brief explanation written by a professional astronomer.

URL: <https://apod.nasa.gov/apod/astropix.html>

Close tab & Re-open last closed tab

Useful browser keyboard shortcuts

I know that some people prefer to use their mouse when browsing but these are two keyboard shortcuts that I use all the time:

To close the current tab in your browser, use the keyboard shortcut Ctrl+W (hold down the Ctrl key and press W).

To re-open the last closed tab, use Ctrl+Shift+T (hold down the Ctrl key and the Shift key and then press T). If you use the shortcut again, the last but one closed tab will be reopened, and so on.

Castle Point Community

Useful Facebook page

A community group for Castle Point covering Canvey, Benfleet, Thundersley, Hadleigh, and Daws Heath. Share local news - from Lost pets to Local Plans, from Pot Plants to Politics (local).

URL: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/castlepointcommunity>

Word Search – Fruit & vegetables

Inspired by the harvest festival...

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

APRICOT
 BROCCOLI
 CELERY
 CHARD
 FENNEL
 FIG
 KOHLRABI
 KUMQUAT
 LEEK
 LETTUCE
 LEMON
 NECTARINE
 OKRA
 PLUM
 RASPBERRY
 RHUBARB
 SHALLOT
 SPINACH
 TURNIP
 ZUCCHINI

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

WHAT'S ON

A round-up of future events in the area

Mon 25 Sep 2023 - Smart Minds - A friendly club for people with dementia & their carers/families. Art activities and socialising with tea and biscuits. At Hadleigh URC from 1.00pm to 3.00pm. Phone Sue on 07889 762172.

ditto - Afternoon Chat & Tea at Hadleigh Library from 2.30pm to 4.30pm.

Tue 26 Sep 2023 - Kettle's On Coffee Morning at St Barnabas Church, Hadleigh, from 10.30am to 12.00 noon. Held every Tue.

Wed 27 Sep 2023 - Coffee Morning at St Michael's Church, St Michael's Road, Daws Heath, from 10.00am to 11.45am. Held every Wed.

Fri 29 Sep 2023 - Benfleet Art & Crafts Club from 2.00pm to 3.30pm at Hadleigh Methodist Church. Held every Friday. Phone 01702 554358 for info.

Sat 30 Sep 2023 - Harvest Coffee Morning & Cake Sale at Hadleigh Methodist Church from 10.00am to 12.30pm. Autumn/harvest themed activities for children.

ditto - Macmillan Coffee Morning at the SA Hadleigh Temple from 10.00am to 1.00pm with Homemade cakes, bacon rolls and tea & coffee.

ditto - Hadleigh & Thundersley Community Archive Drop-in at Hadleigh Library from 10.30am to 12 noon.

ditto - Hadleigh & Thundersley Community Archive slideshow - 'Old Thundersley - A Rural Idyll' at St Peter's Church Hall at 2.00pm (doors open 1.45pm). Admission £4.00. Refreshments available.

ditto - Music In The Park with Gaudeamus - a free, live performance at the Bandstand, Priory Park, Southend-on-Sea. From 3.00pm to 4.30pm. Take your own seating and blankets.

ditto - Thundersley Brass & Epping Forest Band present 'A Symphony of Thanksgiving', featuring Salvation Army music, at Hadleigh Temple. Starts 7.30pm. Free entry. Retiring collection for The Children's Trust.

Sun 1 Oct 2023 - Sunday Social at Hadleigh Methodist Church with board games, quizzes, conversation plus tea, coffee, sandwiches and cake. From 12 noon to 2.00pm, first Sunday of every month. Cost: £2.50.

Mon 2 Oct 2023 - Hadleigh Castle U3A Monthly Meeting - new members welcome. Come along as a guest (£2.00 entry) to see what we're all about. At Hadleigh Methodist Church from 1.30pm to 3.30pm - doors open 1.00pm.

Sat 7 Oct 2023 - Salvation Army Leigh-on-Sea 121st Anniversary Concert with Leigh Orpheus MV Choir featuring the music of Eiliv Herikstad. At Leigh Wesley Methodist Church. Starts 7.00pm. Free entry, donation welcome.

Sat 14 Oct 2023 - Coffee Morning at Hadleigh Methodist Church from 10.00am to 12 noon with drinks, cakes and bric-a-brac stall. Held 2nd Sat of month.

ditto - Beat and Beans Café at St James the Less Church from 10.30am to 12.30pm. Free live music from Monday Folk with coffee, tea and snacks.

ditto - Coffee Morning & Book Sale at St Peter's Church Thundersley from 10.30am to 12.30pm. Held 2nd Sat of every month.

Thu 19 Oct 2023 - Poetry Reading Group reading poems of Seamus Heaney at Hadleigh Library from 2.30pm to 3.30pm, every 3rd Thu. All welcome.

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