

THE HADLEIGH MESSENGER

May & June 2025



The Magazine of the
United Reformed Church, Hadleigh, Essex

SUNDAY SERVICES

Morning service starts at 10.30am
For more information about services,
please phone 01702 557678

PREACHING ARRANGEMENTS FOR MAY 2025

Sun 4 th May	10.30am	Morning Service	Mrs Heather Brown
Sun 11 th May	10.30am	Morning Service	Mr Ian Miller
Sun 18 th May	10.30am	Morning Service with Holy Communion	Rev. Dr Jim Tarrant MA MTh
Sun 25 th May	10.30am	Morning Service	Mr John Amos

PREACHING ARRANGEMENTS FOR JUNE 2025

Sun 1 st Jun	10.30am	Morning Service	Mr Ian Miller
Sun 8 th Jun	10.30am	Morning Service	Mr John Amos
Sun 15 th Jun	10.30am	Morning Service with Holy Communion	Rev. Dr Jim Tarrant MA MTh
Sun 22 nd Jun	10.30am	Morning Service	Clive Lewis
Sun 29 th Jun	6.00pm	Anniversary Service	Mrs Heather Brown

PREACHING ARRANGEMENTS FOR JULY 2025

Sun 6 th Jul	10.30am	Morning Service	Mrs Heather Brown
Sun 13 th Jul	10.30am	Morning Service	Keith & Joyce Berry
Sun 20 th Jul	10.30am	Morning Service with Holy Communion	Mrs Heather Brown
Sun 27 th Jul	10.30am	Morning Service	Mr John Amos

ELDERS' MEETING

TBA

CHURCH MEETING

TBA

CHURCH FLOWERS

Sun 25 th May	June Gargrave – birthday (23 rd)
Sun 1 st June	Pamela George – wedding anniversary (4 th)
Sun 15 th June	Jean Reeve – Father's Day
Sun 29 th June	Doreen Churchill – late husband's birthday (18 th)



Note: If you'd like to make a donation towards the cost of the church flowers on a particular Sunday, perhaps to celebrate a special event or remember a loved one, then please speak to Jean Reeve. Jean's phone number is 01702 554907.

The Wonder of God's Creation

Recently, my husband I were privileged to take a journey of a lifetime. I had promised myself that when I turned 60, I would treat us to a wonderful holiday, which was out of the ordinary.

We flew to Vancouver, Canada and spent four days exploring this diverse and inclusive city, before boarding a cruise ship called Koningsdam.



This would take us north towards Alaska, visiting the towns of Juneau, Skagway and Ketchikan.

We learnt about the gold rush, even visiting a cemetery of those that had died in the late 19th century, including a local story of a

rogue called “Soapy Smith”, who is laid to rest at the cemetery.

Alaska experiences 22 hours of daylight in the summer compared to 21 minutes a day in the winter, and locals rely heavily on the tourist industry to supplement their income all year.

However, for me the best part was the day the ship sailed through the ice to reach Glacier Bay. We stayed on the ship as it slowly did a full circle, navigating the ice in a clear blue sea.



The glacier untouched by humans was breathtaking and filled me with tears at the wonder of what God had created. We saw a humpback whale, sea-lions and dolphins; creatures that are freely existing in extreme conditions, for which they were created.

We are charged with looking after this world, and the opportunity to see these wonders first hand was truly an experience that I will never forget.

Anita Fenn

Prayer Reflection – Receiving the Gift

Be amazed and humbled – awestruck even – that Almighty God wants so close a relationship with us as to dwell in our hearts. Not to control us so that we become like robots responding to commands without any thought, but rather to encourage and enhance the gifts and skills he has given us. God desires to provide the best possible life for us so that we thrive overcoming all manner of difficulties. Thank him for his love and pray for the grace to see people and the world from his perspective.

Be Bold. Prepare to receive God's greatest gift to us, that of himself. Ask for forgiveness for always wanting to do things our way and pray for the humility needed to accept the Holy Spirit in our lives. May the fruits of the Spirit continue to grow in each one of us so that God may be glorified in us as individuals and in his church as a whole.

Be Compassionate. Endeavour to see people and circumstances as Jesus has shown us that God sees them. Pray to be less quick to judge or condemn another's actions. May we all be more prepared to listen to each other and so expand our vision. Ask that we are able to hear and understand how we can help and support one another. When life seems hard may we still be able to trust that God is love and cares for us.

Prayer

Grant us the grace, Lord, to accept the offer of your Spirit within us. Grow in each of us the fruits of the Spirit we recognise – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness and self-control – and those we do not see. Thank you Lord. *Amen*

Beryl Hunt

From the Editor

Welcome to the May & June edition of the Hadleigh Messenger.

This is a rather misleading title since it is being published at the end of June! I like to maintain continuity in the naming for the historical record but I may have to adopt the scheme that Reform magazine has recently adopted of simply numbering editions throughout the year.

Thank you to Sue Horton and Anita Fenn who have contributed material. However, this is a slim edition because of limited time on my part, exacerbated by a painful bout of sciatica, which is affecting my right leg. I've been told that it could be a long haul before it goes away but I hope it's not too long because it is impacting quite severely on daily life.

Malcolm Brown

Churches Together AGM – 14th May 2025

The Churches Together AGM was held at St James the Less Church and chaired by the leader, Major Mark Cozens.

Election of Officers

Leader – Major Mark said that he would not be able to be leader next year. As there were no offers to become leader we need to look for someone else amongst the member churches.

Deputy Leader – There were no nominations.

Treasurer – Stuart Mann has been acting as Treasurer by ring-fencing Church Together funds in a St Barnabas account. Stuart will be standing down as St Barnabas Treasurer as he now lives and worships in Rayleigh. Claire Littlejohn offered to see if the Treasurer at St. James the Less, Tony Harvey, would allow us to hold funds in their account and work alongside Claire as Treasurer for CTH.

Secretary – Malcolm Brown said he was happy to continue as Secretary.

Minutes Secretary – Claire Littlejohn said she was willing to continue in the role.

Financial report

The current balance is £311.11 but some Churches have still to pay the annual £10 subscription.

Leader's report

Major Mark started by thanking all those very committed people in the Churches Together in Hadleigh who had enabled the events of the past twelve 12 months. The Remembrance services were well attended and Rev. Pete Hillman and Rev. Mike Ketley were thanked for helping Major Mark lead these services.

The Christmas card detailing all the different Christmas services in the various Hadleigh Churches, was designed, compiled and distributed by Roger Kingston, who was thanked for all his efforts.

All the churches had participated in leading worship during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity; the World Day of Prayer in March, organised and held by the Salvation Army, was well attended and much appreciated.

The Lent Course, held at the United Reformed Church on five consecutive Wednesday evenings, was centred on Care for Creation and led by a different minister/lay minister each week.

The Good Friday united service at the Methodist church was very well attended and enhanced by members of the Salvation Army band accompanying the hymns. A good number of people went on the Walk of Witness afterwards and all members of the public who saw it were very respectful. The tea/coffee and hot cross buns that followed were much enjoyed.

There were 45 people who joined in the Sunrise service at the castle on Easter morning.

On Palm Sunday came the sad announcement of the closure of St. Thomas More RC Church.

Major Mark commented that as those taking responsibility within the Church grow older there is the continuing problem of clergy becoming more stretched and congregations having to share their leadership with others. But fortunately we know that God is in charge and He has a habit of making all things new. We trust Him for our future - He will not fail.

Malcolm Brown (based on minutes drafted by Claire)

Churches Together in England welcomes Tessa Henry-Robinson as President for 2025 – 2028

As her term in office as Moderator of the Free Churches Group begins*, Rev. Dr Tessa Henry-Robinson (TH-R), who also acts as one of the Presidents of Churches Together in England (CTE), spoke to CTE's Senior Communications Manager, Sarah Ball (SB):



Rev. Dr Tessa Henry Robinson

SB: Welcome to the CTE Presidency Rev. Dr Tessa. How did your ecumenical journey begin?

TH-R: My ecumenical journey began long before I understood the word. As a child in Trinidad and Tobago, I lived the beauty and complexity of the Christian tradition through my family. My father was born in Tobago and raised in the Methodist tradition. My mother was born in Trinidad and raised in a Roman Catholic and Pentecostal household. I was baptised in the Methodist Church, educated in Roman Catholic and Anglican schools, and worshipped in Pentecostal settings during holidays with my maternal grandparents.

From early on, I encountered difference as a gift. That beginning shaped my lens, and helped me to see the rich variety within the body of Christ as something to honour, not to fear. My journey continues to unfold as one committed to the hard work of shared mission, mutual respect, and spiritual integrity across denominational lines.

SB: What was your first ecumenical experience? How formative was this?

TH-R: My earliest (formal) ecumenical experience came in the early 2000s while I was a member of Christ Church Bellingham. I was part of a small team tasked with building relationships across five local churches. That experience was not only informative. It was deeply formative. It taught me that unity across Christian traditions is not just an abstract hope. It is a relational task that demands presence, humility, and trust.

As I worshipped, dialogued, and shared life with colleagues from a range of denominational

backgrounds, I began to sense the Spirit moving in ways I had not seen before. I witnessed how God works through different liturgies, languages, and leadership models. Some tensions surfaced, of course. But they were not held as obstacles, they were used as invitations and opportunities to grow deeper in grace. Ecumenical work has never been about erasing difference, it is about honouring difference, engaging it with love, and letting it stretch us toward fuller faithfulness.

Unity, for me, is the hard and holy commitment to keep choosing one another because of our differences, not despite them.

SB: You are a URC Minister, how has being part of that church influenced your thoughts on Christian unity?

TH-R: The United Reformed Church is itself a living sign of ecumenical commitment. Its very formation brought together multiple denominations in pursuit of a more faithful expression of the Church. To be a URC minister is to have been shaped in the context of being reformed and always reforming in a denomination that not only values being reformed and building unity, but was born from “*Ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda secundum verbum Dei*”, “The church reformed, always being reformed according to the Word of God.” My ministerial formation has been rooted in the conviction that Christian unity matters—that we can be deeply faithful to our own traditions while also working generously across them.

The URC has given me space to live this conviction in practice: through shared worship, collaborative ministry, and openness to the Spirit speaking through other voices and traditions. I have been formed by a community that has moved from just talking about being a multicultural church with an intercultural habit, and becoming anti-racist, to being in the process of seeking, diligently, to embody these principles. This experience has instilled in me a deep hope that visible unity in the Body of Christ is not only possible, but essential to our witness in the world today.

*Rev. Dr Tessa Henry-Robinson, was inducted as Moderator of the Free Churches Group in April, and served as Moderator of the United Reformed Church General Assembly from 2023-2024.

Family News

Daphne Lockwood

Daphne, who worshipped with us for several years, passed away on Thursday 10th April in Basildon Hospital. Her funeral took place on Wednesday 14th May at Hadleigh Methodist Church.

I hope to include an obituary in the next magazine.

We continue to remember Daphne's family after their sad loss.

Colin Blackall

Colin, who worshipped with us in the evening for a while before the Corononavirus pandemic, passed way in Southend Hospital on Friday 4th April. A memorial service was held on Friday 9th May at St James the Less Church.

We continue to remember Colin's family after their loss. .

Arthur Haywood

Arthur, who was once a familiar sight around Hadleigh with his dog Sacha, sadly passed away in Southend Hospital on 12th June. He worshipped with us occasionally at our evening Communion and was a great advocate of the power of prayer.

Arthur's funeral will take place at Woodside Chapel on Thursday 10th July. Please speak to Malcolm if you would like to attend.

We send our sincere condolences to Arthur's wife Joyce and to all the family.

Birthdays in May, June & early July



Prayer

Lord God, we offer our praise at your creation.

We see the sunshine brightening up our world,
we feel the rain cooling our bodies and feeding the soil.

Our vast oceans and mountains are incredible, as is the intricate detail of every cobweb or flower.
And yet, we take so much for granted, that we fail to take notice of what we are doing to your planet.

We use the resources for our own need or gain with no regard to the damage we are doing.

We plunder and destroy for our own benefit with no regard for consequences.

We are sorry for our selfishness and greed.

Lord we know that if we are truly sorry, you will forgive us.

That if we commit to turning our lives around and trying again, we are assured of your forgiveness.

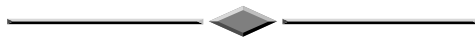
We offer our commitment and receive your blessing.

Thank you Lord for your world and our part in it.

May we share what we have, offer our love, compassion and care to all we meet
that we might honour your name and live out your word.

Thank you for the gifts you provide us with to fully become your people.

Be with us now as we listen for your word that we may be inspired to go out and live for you every day. *Amen*



Please remember those associated with our fellowship in need of prayer...



London Marathon 2025

Sue Horton has kindly written an account of her run in this year's London Marathon.

After last year's London Marathon I was lucky enough to acquire a 'Good for Age' place this year meaning that I didn't have to hope for a ballot place entry as they are quite scarce. Many people enter the ballot and some have gone ten years or more without getting a place.

On Sunday 27th April at 06.30 a.m., I began my coach journey from Little Havens Hospice to the marathon start at Blackheath with my friend Judee Peterson. There was a nip in the air at that time of the morning, so warm clothes were needed. At Blackheath, the sun had begun to shine and it was warm and relaxing. We met a lady Metropolitan Police officer from Canvey Island who recognised my Benfleet running vest and we chatted for a while about her colleague's police horse and her own role as a fitness training officer. Judee and I sat on the grass and had tea and a light mid morning snack before I made way into the start pen and to drop my kit bag.

I started my marathon journey at 11.25 a.m. For the second year running, the weather was quite warm at this point and it was only going to get hotter. I started off at the same pace as last year but found because it was getting warmer all the time I was tiring much faster than last year. I made sure I had plenty to drink and energy sweeties on the way round to help keep me going. Care must be taken with adequate hydration and energy intake or there is a risk of collapse in the later stages from mile 19 onwards. Indeed many a young man and the odd woman collapsed due to dehydration (lack of water) and or hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar). This time I had to conserve my energy and have a few walks unlike last year. There were plenty of toilets around the course for the runners but I was lucky enough not to have to stop.

There was a huge crowd spectating throughout the course, most waiting to see their family members and friends come through so lots of shouting and cheering. There were bands playing, choirs singing around the course and generally it was very festive. I met my friend Judee on Tower Bridge at about mile 12½ and we had a photo together. I met Ed, my husband, and his two friends at mile 14 in Narrow Street, which was quite uplifting. My neighbour and her family were spectating at Canary Wharf near mile 18; I

was absolutely surprised to see them. The little girl of 7 was shouting "Sue" and the little boy of 4 was pushing his way to the railings shouting to all in the way, "I want to see my Nanny Sue".

At mile 20 I met another two friends who were marshalling and then I met Ed and his friends again near St Anne's Church, Limehouse near mile 22, which felt very cheering. By this time I was pretty tired and had to pace myself accordingly, I knew though it was not too far until the finish, a comforting feeling.

At mile 23, I met some of my running club friends and I got the promised bits of Mars and mint flavoured chocolate. It was lovely to see them all but they were extremely busy, tending to runners who were unwell, had cramp or had collapsed. It was the busiest mile for that. Onward I went, and could see the London Eye in the distance, which told me I wasn't far from Westminster and the finish, which couldn't come soon enough.

The race is electronically timed via a little chip that is stuck to the race number. As you run over strategically placed sensors, they pick up your whereabouts and record the time. The final sensor is at the finish. When I reached the finish on The Mall, I walked through, collected my medal and



Sue with 2025 medal

some drinks, and then collected my bag. It had taken me 5 hours, 51 minutes and 59 seconds, about 15 minutes longer than the year before. I may well have won another Good for Age place as my time was within the specified frame but I

have to wait until October to be sure.

After finishing, I sat on the grass chilling out and changed into some warm clothes with fresh socks and shoes, before wandering over to Horse Guards Parade to meet up with Ed, his friend and Judee. I was so happy to see them.

This year's London Marathon saw a record 56,640 finishers and made the Guinness Book of Records. I am so grateful to my amazing London Marathon sponsors who together raised the considerable sum of £695 plus gift aid for Havens Hospices.

Sue Horton

News from around the URC

URC members receive Maundy Thursday coins from King

Rev. Louise Gee, an East Midland Synod Pastoral Consultant who also serves as Chaplain and Trustee at Friary Drop In (West Bridgford), and John East, a former Elder from Central URC in Darwen, attended a ceremony in Durham Cathedral for the annual presentation of Maundy Money just before the Easter weekend.



Each year, purses with the special coins are distributed by the Monarch to a selected number of men and women whose ages match the age of the Royal on Maundy Thursday. This year, 76

people received the Maundy Money, to the value of 76p in a white purse. The gift is to mark their years of Christian service in their communities. The tradition dates back to 1210. Also handed out to the recipients was a red purse containing a £5 coin commemorating The Queen Mother and a 50p coin featuring stories of WWII.

Explaining how he felt humbled, John who has served as Chair of DARE (Darwen Asylum Seeker and Refugee Enterprise and held many roles within the community, said: “I was delighted to be nominated to receive Maundy Money. Having the privilege to serve the Christian Church in many roles, it’s important to reflect each day on developing that relationship with Jesus and to be able to learn and sustain a living faith.”

Because of her strong connections with North East England and Northumbrian spirituality, Louise was delighted that this year’s ceremony took place at the cathedral. She was accompanied by her eldest son Duncan.

“This was probably one of the most amazing days ever,” said Louise. “The feeling when the envelope arrived, once I’d got past the thought that this was a joke, was just one of great excitement, but Maundy Thursday definitely topped all my expectations. A very proud day but for sure, the icing on the cake was when King Charles took my hand and thanked me for the incredible work I have done and continue to do within chaplaincy, church and community.

“I accepted these purses with great delight and great pride on behalf of all those I have walked alongside over the years in many churches, in the prison and those who live on the margins – all who have been such a blessing to my ministry for whom I give thanks to our Lord. I’ve been asked if I’m still basking in the afterglow – the answer is yes!”

New Youth Moderator shares hopes for term



Maya Withall was inducted as the United Reformed Church Youth Assembly Moderator for 2025–2026 in March.

In this reflection, Maya shares her thoughts on Youth Assembly 2025: how it unfolded, what it meant to her, and the hopes she carries into her term as Moderator.

This year’s youth assembly felt really fresh and calm, something which can be hard. The new site was amazing and everything we hoped for proving an opportunity to reshape how we run Youth Assembly. Over the weekend we had time to delve into the theme of “All are Welcome” from our range of workshops to our amazing keynote.

The new “breath” session allowed some much-needed down time but also an opportunity for people to explore the range of different topics available from cake and debate, where we discussed the dangers of AI and what minimum voting age should be, to sports and forest church. We left Youth Assembly pondering what we should do to embody the theme and how we can make people feel more welcome, not just in the URC but our lives.

Looking ahead to my term as Youth Moderator, I can already anticipate that this year on Youth Exec is not going to be like any other! While I am nervous about the changes to the Youth Exec following its review, I am also excited about the opportunities these changes will bring. My hope for this year is that young people in the URC will feel more connected and able to engage with the Youth Executive in ways they couldn’t before, and that youth exec can enable young people to get involved in the URC on a broader level.

Most of all, I am looking forward to working with the new Youth Executive to plan an amazing Youth Assembly 2026! I am also eager to explore what work we can do at a more localised level through our Synod reps. A key focus for me this year will be the environment. I hope we can be more mindful and considerate about sustainability in our planning of Youth Assembly and make it a more environmentally friendly event.

Beyond that, I want to explore how we can encourage young people to inspire their local churches to consider their role in climate change and their environmental impact in what they do. Since Children's and Youth Work played such a big part in how I came to be involved in the URC, I'm passionate about how we can help more young people engage with the URC: not just locally but at a national level.

Teenager who loves playing church organ gains Lundie award



Nineteen-year-old Dan Powell, from Southern Synod, is April's recipient of the Lundie Memorial Award.

Dan, who discovered his love for the organ at the young age of five, has been playing in church since he was 15. He often plays the opening songs in one church before running to another, starting half an hour later, to play their introductory songs.

Although he is always adding new songs to his repertoire his favourite song is "How Great Thou Art", the last song sung with his great grandad before he died and which he played at his funeral.

Dan's skills are often utilised for funerals and weddings, a responsibility he says is daunting but also a privilege.

Dan, who was nominated by Pam Tolhurst, Gillingham United Reformed Church's local leader, is described by her as "a valuable member of the church, someone who is reliable and totally committed to giving of his best".

Each recipient of the Lundie award receives £100. Dan is still thinking about how best to use this but knows it will be of great benefit to his church.

URC offers greetings and prayers to Pope Leo XIV

Rev. Timothy Meadows, Moderator of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church, has offered Pope Leo XIV greetings and prayers from the URC after his election as Supreme Pontiff of the Catholic Church.

"On behalf of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church, I extend our warmest greetings to His Holiness Pope Leo XIV, and assure His Holiness, along with our Catholic sisters and brothers, of our continued prayers and support at this significant juncture in the life of the Church world-wide.

"The United Reformed Church joins with His Holiness in the call to peace and in the sacred endeavour to build bridges of compassion and justice."

Born in Chicago as Robert Prevost, Pope Leo became the 267th pontiff on Thursday 8 May and the first North American to be elected. He called for peace and paid tribute to the late Pope Francis in his first remarks from the balcony of St Peter's Basilica, Rome, in front of tens of thousands of people.

God stays the same

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

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

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

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

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

Sam Hargreaves

I Wish I'd Been There

The Council of Nicaea was 1,700 years old in May. Susan Durber writes about this most momentous church meeting of all in Issue 3 of Reform magazine.

I'm confident that many readers of Reform have been to church meetings of all sorts; a few Elders gathered in the vestry to seek wisdom on some pressing matter, a congregation's AGM, a synod meeting or a General Assembly, perhaps a larger conference with hundreds gathered at The Hayes in Derbyshire, or even Vatican II in Rome.

Let me take you to another meeting, in a way the first of its kind. Imagine about 250 delegates from all over North Africa, the Middle East and other parts of Asia and Europe. They came to Nicaea in modern-day Turkey from a dazzling variety of churches and situations. Some of them were highly educated, others barely literate, many bore wounds and disabilities from the vicious persecution of Christians that had ended little more than a decade before.

All of them were called 'episkopos', bishop, but they didn't wear mitres or have university degrees. Some of them cared for a small number of Christians from backwater towns and others were from cities where Christianity had flourished. Most of them could probably get by in Greek, the street language of the empire, and some would have Latin, but between them they had many different mother tongues.

Some were educated, urbane and experienced in the ways of the Roman world, some might have been freed slaves who had done the work of reading and writing for their former masters, and many would have been simple artisans, tentmakers like Paul, or fishermen like Peter.

Their clothes, their music, their ethnicities, showcased the diversity of the world. They each came with an entourage, with deacons and priests, many travelling for weeks to get to Nicaea and perhaps never having ventured far from home before.

They had come at the invitation of the Emperor Constantine, because he wanted one united religion to bind the empire of which he was now sole ruler. He paid their expenses, fed them a great banquet, gave them a rousing

speech about the importance of unity, and then left them to it with the Bishop of Cordoba in Spain in the chair. He didn't mind how they sorted out their differences, only that they did.

And the agenda? Some believed that they had suffered so much persecution because they were disunited, and they desired unity not because it was useful to the Emperor, but so that Christ's prayer 'that they all may be one' could be fulfilled.

Maybe some of them sensed that the followers of Jesus Christ were in danger of being fragmented into so many different local expressions that they could make no impact on the world at all, that the one body of Christ could be broken. And so, they worked, over ten weeks, to find a deep unity in faith and in practice.

On the agenda were things like the date of Easter, what position for prayer should be adopted on Sundays, the way that ministers should be chosen and whether they could lend money, how Christian leadership across a local area should work, how those who had lapsed and survived during persecution should be regarded, and, perhaps most importantly of all, what the Church should say about who Jesus is.

These were not things that could be settled in an evening or in a hasty half hour after Sunday worship. It took a good part of a Mediterranean summer to come to conclusions (to which most, though not all, could agree), and some of their unity fell apart quite quickly when they'd gone home to their distant dioceses. There had to be further meetings and councils and, indeed, you could say that their agenda continues today.

But they were the first to give the seeking of unity so much time and prayer in quite the way they did. Churches around the world, of many kinds, honour them this year by marking the 1700th anniversary of their meeting at Nicaea. As Christians meet in our congregations, in our assemblies and ecumenical meetings, we follow in their footsteps. Though rarely for ten weeks at a time!

We don't have the minutes of the meeting, but some of the decisions they made still shape our lives today. They agreed that all Christians should celebrate the resurrection of Christ (Easter) on a Sunday (Christians still do this, though sadly, because of differences of calendar, it is not always the same Sunday). They agreed that prayer should be made standing up on Sundays, as it is the day of resurrection.

The meeting decided that you couldn't go immediately from being baptised to being a bishop, that it was important to mature in faith first, that Christian leaders should not lend money at interest, and that bishops should not move quickly from one diocese to another, but stay put. They said that there should be local synods and that these should meet twice a year – once in Lent and once in the Autumn (sound familiar?) They also established some expectations and ways back for the restoration of those who had accommodated to Rome during persecution.

There was also the main item on the agenda, that question about how to speak about who Jesus is. They needed to find a way to do it that made clear, in the midst of a Roman culture that had many gods and which could even turn emperors into gods, that Christians believe in one God. And they wanted to proclaim the full divinity and humanity of Christ, without implying either that he was a second God, or that he was 'merely' created – in the words of Tim Rice (Jesus Christ Superstar), just a man'.

There were some profound disagreements about how best to do this. They turned to Scripture (and remember, they didn't get have an agreed New Testament), but in the end used a Greek word to express their faith that Jesus was 'of one being' with the Father, and declared him the Son of God 'only-begotten' (that is, not made, and the only one). They described, in spare and wonderful poetry, how the one God was in Christ and became human for our salvation. Anyone who has sung 'O come, all ye faithful' will know some of the finest of their words.

This is the final conference statement, translated here from the Greek, presented first in draft and then revised over weeks:

We believe in one God,

the Father of the whole Universe,
maker of all things visible and invisible;
And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God,
begotten from the Father, Only—begotten,
that is, of one being with the Father,
God from God, light from light,
true God from true God
begotten not made,
of one being with the Father,
the living and dead,
And in the Holy Spirit.

For those at this meeting of the Church, it was incarnation that was the place and moment of our salvation and they put it into words that would be said at baptisms, that could be used to show how radically different their faith was from the culture of Rome. How amazing that Jesus, a subject of empire, who has compassion on the poor, who welcomed women and who washed feet like an enslaved person, this Jesus was the one who was 'of the same being as God'. This is what God looks like and loves like. These few, elegant words could hardly have been more subversive of the empire that had paid for the meeting. Glorious irony!

By all accounts the meeting was feisty and tense at times, and not everyone behaved in a saintly way. And their short statement ended with some blunt words about those who lost the theological argument. There could be no compromise on the heart of faith, our faith, that there is one God, and what we see in Jesus is the love and being of that one God.

Of course, history continued, as it does, after that meeting at Nicaea. Fifty or so years later the statement was expanded by others to become what we now call the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed. Nobody at Nicaea thought that Christians all over the world, for centuries to come, would be printing something like their theological statement in their hymn books or saying it every week in worship. They had simply done their best to speak faithfully, and together, about God's work in Jesus Christ in a way that would find resonance in their day.

We might honour them best by doing the same, as best we can, for our time.

Susan Durber

Susan Durber is a member of the Landsker Pastorate in Pembrokeshire, and the World Council of Churches President from Europe.

Computer Corner

Here's What Your Phone's IMEI Number Means

Interesting article

As the world moved from feature phones to smartphones over the last few decades, a tiny detail called an IMEI number has remained a constant. But why is it significant, and what does its existence mean for you?

URL: <https://www.howtogeek.com/here-s-what-your-phone-imei-number-means>

Notepad++

Useful free software

I suspect that most of us have our favourite text editor and for many this is probably Microsoft's Notepad, which comes with Windows. I use a now defunct program named Programmer's File Editor, which I have got used to over the years. If you're on the lookout for a different text editor then one that is often recommended is Notepad++.

It is a free source code editor and Notepad replacement that supports several languages running in the MS Windows environment and its use is governed by GNU General Public License. Notepad++ is written in C++ and uses pure Win32 API and STL which ensures a higher execution speed and smaller program size.

URL: <https://notepad-plus-plus.org>

Survey: Local Government Reorganisation in Greater Essex

Interesting web page

Within three years Essex County Council and Castle Point Borough Council will no longer exist. Have your say on the future council structure by completing the survey accessible from this page.

URL: <https://yoursay.southend.gov.uk/yoursayfutureofessex>

Word Search – Words associated with hot weather

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

BAKING
BALMY
BLISTERING
BOILING
BURN
FIERY
HEATWAVE
HOT
MUGGY
OPPRESSIVE
SCORCHER
SIZZLING
STEAMY
STIFLING
SULTRY
SWEATY
SWELTER
TOASTY
TORRID
TROPICAL

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 30 Jun 2025	- Smart Minds dementia club at Hadleigh URC from 1.00pm to 3.00pm every Mon. Phone Sue on 07889 762172 if interested.
	ditto - Afternoon Tea & Chat at Hadleigh Library from 2.30pm to 4.30pm.
Tue 1 Jul 2025	- Kettle's On Coffee Morning at St Barnabas Church, Hadleigh, from 10.30am to 12.00 noon. Held every Tue.
Wed 2 Jul 2025	- Westwood Art Group Meeting at SA Hadleigh Temple from 9.30am to 12 noon, every Wed. £20 for 3 months. Contact Ian on 07768 871875.
	ditto - Coffee Morning at St Michael's Church, St Michael's Road, Daws Heath, from 10.00am to 11.45am. Held every Wed.
	ditto - Rayleigh Country Market at the WI Hall, Bellingham Lane, Rayleigh, from 10.00am to 12 noon, every Wednesday.
Thu 3 Jul 2025	- Drop-in at SA Hadleigh Temple from 9.30am to 12 noon with friendly chat, free tea and toast or coffee and cake, every Thu.
	ditto - Coffee Morning at the church from 10.30am to 12 noon. Free refills.
Fri 4 Jul 2025	- Benfleet Art & Crafts Club from 2.00pm to 3.30pm at Hadleigh Methodist Church. Held every Friday. Phone 01702 554358 for info.
Sat 5 Jul 2025	- Hadleigh PIP Councillors Street Stall outside Iceland store, Rectory Road from 10.00am to 12.00 noon. Held 2 nd Sat, weather permitting.
	ditto - Music in the Park (free) with the Hockley Youth Wind Band at Priory Park from 3.00pm to 4.30pm.
Sun 6 Jul 2025	- Allegro Choir Sings the Alphabet at Benfleet Methodist Church. Starts at 3.00pm. Tickets £10.00 - phone 01268 751303.
	Music in the Park (free) with Tilbury Band at Priory Park from 3.00pm to 4.30pm.
Sat 12 Jul 2025	- Coffee Morning at Hadleigh Methodist Church from 10.00am to 12 noon with drinks, cakes and bric-a-brac stall. Held 2 nd Sat of month.
	ditto - Beat and Beans Café at St James the Less Church from 10.30am to 12.30pm. Refreshments & live music by U3A Ukulele Band.
	ditto - Coffee Morning & Book Sale at St Peter's Church, Thundersley from 10.30am to 12.30pm. Held 2 nd Sat of month.
	ditto - Daws Heath Village Fayre at St Michael's Field, Daws Heath, from 12.30pm to 4.00pm.
Sun 13 Jul 2025	- Music in the Park (free) with the Harmonie Band at Priory Park from 3.00pm to 4.30pm.
Sat 26 Jul 2025	- Hadleigh & Thundersley Community Archive Drop-in at Hadleigh Library from 10.30am to 12 noon.
Fri 8 Aug 2025	- International Cricket with Hadleigh & Thundersley CC v. PCA England Legends (free) at John Burrows Recreation Ground. Starts at 3.30pm.
Sun 31 Aug 2025	- Hadleigh Community Fayre at John Burrows Recreation Ground from 11.00am to 5.00pm.

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