

**I am
the resurrection
and the life.
Those who believe
in me,
even though
they die, will live,
and everyone
who lives and
believes in me
will never die.**

WITHAM URC CHURCH MAGAZINE

April 2023

Our Vision: "To celebrate God and share the love of Jesus."

Pastoral Letter

Dear Friends

I dug out our compost bin this week and after some sieving and sorting I was delighted at the result. Four barrow loads of new compost have been spread over the newly weeded beds and planting has begun. It is always great to see the fruits of your labour making a positive difference. Last year's weeds and some other plant material have gone from being unwanted into something very useful.



God's people are blessed with a fruitful mixture of gifts and talents; like trees in an orchard or plants in a garden. There is huge potential in our community to further God's Kingdom if we use and apply our talents. Volunteers who make music, teach, cook, preach and fix broken things keep our fellowship running. However it is not just what they do but the way they care for others along the way that makes a difference. Just like good compost that emerges from unwanted plants, individuals who feel broken can be helped by caring and thoughtful members of our community.



Ten years ago I wrote a Pastoral Letter that celebrated the pleasant diversity of the music in our Church. Who would have thought that we would face so much angst over music as we emerged from the pandemic just over a year ago? Happily the spirit of working together has returned. Trenchant views have been aired and compromises reached. We can all enjoy each service and remember why we go to church.

The celebration of Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday gives us hope and joy as we proclaim 'Jesus is alive!' During the ensuing weeks we revisit the events that led to the creation of the Christian Church. Added to that is the sense of new life (in the Northern Hemisphere) that comes with Springtime.

I hope your path from Easter and beyond is as bright as a spring flower and as productive as good compost.

Yours in Christ

Billy Kennedy



Celtic style
Communion Service



Sunday Evening April 16th
6.30pm



Save the Date Weekend at Home - Lorna

We are planning a mini weekend at home the weekend of **Friday 17th to Saturday 18th June**. More details will follow later but please reserve Friday evening and all day Saturday in your diaries.

We have invited Sam Okafor to lead us on the topic of prayer.

Nicola Grieves from Synod and her team will lead our children and youth work.

Holdfast Credit Union
Beginning with Budgeting - Naomi
Claxton



Budget airlines...budget holidays...budget hotels...when I think of those, I think cheap and basic, no frills, no fun. However, 'budget' doesn't mean cheap at all - the best example of that is probably The budget, the spending plans of the government. In the 2021-22 period, there was income of £929 billion, and spending of £1.045 trillion, and an £116 billion overspend. I find it really hard to picture huge numbers like that. If you think about it as time instead of money, a million seconds is about 11.6 days. A billion seconds is about 32 years....so clearly 'budget' doesn't mean cheap! It just means having a plan for your money.

Budgeting is a really valuable life skill, but it is not taught at schools, and many people have grown up in homes where either nobody else had the knowledge to pass on to them, or money just wasn't talked about.

Making a budget can feel scary, especially in these times when costs are going up and up and incomes are staying the same, or falling. However scary it feels, having a clear picture of your finances is the first step in taking control of them and making some changes. If you have not had an easy history with money, it can be easy to think that you are 'just no good with money' but the truth is, anyone can improve their financial situation with the right support.

At the most basic level, making a budget is finding out how much money you have coming in, how much you have going out, and hopefully finding that there is some left over. You can do this with pen and paper, a spreadsheet, or there are lots of apps (both free and paid for) that can help. You can have an overall budget for your spending, and make smaller ones within that - for example a groceries budget, or Christmas budget.

In your outgoings, you will have some costs that are either fixed, or you can't influence (for example your mortgage and council tax) and others that fluctuate and you have an element of control over - things like your groceries and discretionary spending money.

The key here is to not only work out what you think you should be spending in these categories, but what you actually have been spending, by going back through your bank statements. When you aren't tracking your spending, it can be easy to spend a lot in small amounts that add up. If you find you need to reduce your spending in an area, it is better to try and cut back a smaller amount over a few months rather than one big cut, as that can feel too difficult.

Budgets work best when you check in on them regularly through the month. A five-minute check at the start of each week can have a really positive effect on your finances. It gives you a chance to make any adjustments you need to before things get out of hand.

It may be that this is already second nature to you - but if it isn't and you would like a free guide, or help in making your budget, pop up and see us in the office, or send an email to office@holdfastcreditunion.co.uk. We can also help if you would like to start a savings account to put money aside for things like car tax, insurance, and servicing, or ready for Christmas.

We would also love to hear from you if you have any good budgeting ideas to share, or tips to save money, or make it go further. My husband's best tip, that he tells me often is - it is a budget, not a target!

Fellowship Afloat - Trinity Project

Trinity 3 – Fully Funded!!

Wonderful, wonderful news!... Join us in celebrating that our Trinity3 project is fully funded. A couple of outstanding elements of the last phase will be done during the summer, but after seven years of phased work onboard we have managed to achieve the vision of a renewed & expanded lightvessel.



This huge project to fully refurbish and re-develop our floating centre, *Trinity*, started in 2016 and continued each winter (with a small break for covid!) while still welcoming our guests each season – it has been a massive undertaking and has provided a much-enhanced facility, with extra spaces and capacity to accommodate groups in a bigger and better way. There is no doubt that the centre is equipped for the next generation. We are so grateful for this provision, to all who have encouraged, prayed, and contributed to making it possible. We are also thankful to a wonderful team of contractors that worked so well to deliver the project on schedule each year.

A celebration event is being planned for 2024 – more details to follow in due course. Join us in thanks and praise!

The Covenant Prayer - Eve Murfitt

When Mark was with us he gave us all the prayer below in church when we returned after Covid on the first Sunday of the new year. I keep mine in my bible and say it on the first day of each month to recommit myself. I find this a great help to do this for all the that he has done for us.

I am no longer my own but yours.
Put me to what you will,
rank me with whom you will;
put me to doing,
put me to suffering;
let me be employed for you,
or laid aside for you,
exalted for you,
or brought low for you;
let me be full,
let me be empty,
let me have all things,
let me have nothing:
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things
to your pleasure and disposal.
And now, glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you are mine and I am yours. So be it.
And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven.'

Amen



Coronation Afternoon Tea
Monday April 24th
2.30pm
£6.00

Booking Essential

Please let the office know if you would like to come
01376 500958



Tuesday Praise Leaders- Emmelia Van der Walt

- 4th April - Marina Price
- 11th April - Ian Hardie
- 18th April - Jane Quinton
- 25th April - Nixon Gomez

How do you take your tea? Milk? Sugar? Plastic? - Naomi Claxton

Plastic?

Yes, plastic! Many manufacturers add polypropylene plastic to the teabag paper to help heat seal them. Unfortunately this means that when they are composted, they break down releasing tiny pieces of plastic (known as microplastic) into the soil. Microplastics are now being found in the soil, sea, and our drinking water, as well as fish and animals. This means that we are ingesting microplastics, the long term effect of which is not yet known.



Teabags are not the only source of microplastics, but considering more than 60 billion cups of tea are drunk per year in the UK alone, it is certainly worth trying to make sure that we are choosing plastic free teabags wherever possible.

It is worth noting that some tea manufacturers have started to use polylactic acid, or PLA instead of polypropylene - however while this is plant based plastic, it is still plastic. Another consideration is that PLA can come from genetically modified crops, and also are not suitable for home composting.

There is not necessarily a perfect choice (loose leaf tea may well be the closest to this), and as with so many green matters, there are different aspects to consider, and we all have to make the best choice we can for our own lives, families, and budgets. Life does not have to be all or nothing either - I have milk delivered in glass bottles on a Monday, and then plastic the rest of the week, as I don't have it in my budget to have only milk in glass bottles. The glass bottles get reused, and the plastic ones recycled. Big change comes from lots of people doing the best they can, rather than a small number of people doing everything perfectly.

Compostable Tea Bags - Home Compost Heap

Clipper string and tag bags are home compostable, as well as being fair trade. You can buy them in bulk online which gives best value for money. I can attest to it being a good cup of tea! Pukka tea bags can also be home composted, as can Nemi tea.

Industrially Compostable Tea Bags - Council Food Waste Bin

Asda own brands including their Just Essentials can go in your food waste bin, as can bags from Bird & Blend tea, Brew Tea, Co-Op 99 (also fairtrade), PG Tips, Sainsburys, TeaPigs, TickTock, and Yorkshire.

Tea Bags Containing Plastic

Apart from their Specially Selected Infusion tea bags, Aldi tea bags are heat-sealed using polypropylene plastic, as are Lidl, although Lidl's pyramid teabags use PPA instead. Surprisingly to me, Marks & Spencer and Waitrose have not removed plastic from their entire ranges. M&S is only plastic free in their herbal range, and Waitrose own brand decaf tea bags still contain plastic.

The Others

Neither Tesco or Morrisons have put out any information to say their own brand teabags are plastic free. Tetley is in the process of switching from plastic heat sealing, and Twinings have committed to being plastic-free by 2025.

If your favourite brand is not yet plastic free, write, email, or tweet them asking them to change. Consumer pressure can have a big influence. You could switch to that brand's loose leaf option if they offer one, or perhaps just try a new brand.

Other eco-tips include descaling your kettle using citric acid or white vinegar instead of buying descaler, and only boiling enough water as you need, to save energy. After all that, I think I need a cup of tea!

**Gabriel Kataiah Thomas Thurimella
born 22nd March 2023
to Laura and Moe a son
and brother to Myra**



**Laura and Moe were members of WURC
before they moved to Orpington**

Frugal Recipe from our very own Masterchef - but it is not us!

Red Lentil Dahl - Serves 4 for under £2

A quick and easy curry, for when time or money is tight.

1 onion, chopped (I often use frozen)

1 400g can chopped tomatoes

1 400g coconut milk (can use light)

200g split red lentils

2 tbsp curry powder, mild or medium according to your taste, OR

1/2 tsp each ginger, coriander, turmeric, and a pinch of dried chillis, OR
your own selection of spices

Optional - garlic, spinach, lemon juice, shredded left over cooked chicken,
yogurt

Fry your onion on a low heat in a little oil until soft. Add garlic if you are using, and your spices.

Stir in your lentils, the chopped tomatoes, and coconut milk. Stir well.

Simmer slowly for twenty minutes, stirring to make sure it does not stick, and add a little water from the kettle if it seems too thick. It should be thick enough that you can scoop it up with flatbreads. Add the lemon juice at the end if you are using it.

If you are adding spinach and/or chicken, stir it in towards the end until the spinach is wilted and the chicken heated through.

Serve in bowls with a swirl of yogurt if you are using it, and toasted flatbreads, naan, or pitta.

Leftovers will keep in the fridge or can be frozen. Nice reheated with a splash of water to loosen (it will thicken on cooling) and served with a poached or fried egg.

Coming soon to a street near you!

Street golf



Great Totham URC - Sue Bowyer

Preachers for April .

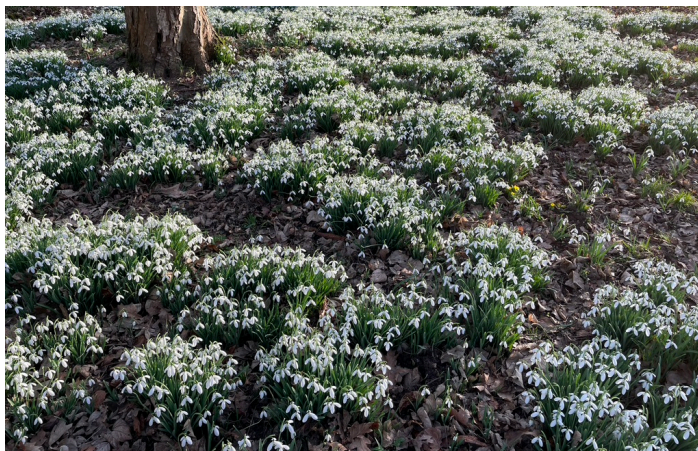
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|------------|-------------------------|
| April 2nd. | Rev. Mark Ambrose |
| April 9th. | Easter Day . Ron Hutson |
| April 16th | Sarah Wilson |
| April 23rd | Trevor Andrews |
| April 30th | Service at Witham URC |

All are welcome to join us, our Services begin at 10 - 30 am

Our next Coffee morning will be on Saturday 8th April , 10 until 11-30am

You'll find us in Chapel Road , Gt. Totham North, CM9 8DA.

Snowdrops at Markshall Estate, Coggeshall



Great Totham URC - Jean Moody

Easter Article by Rev Peter Stevenson

The gospel writers tell the story of the resurrection in different ways. Parallel readings of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John reveals something of the importance that each writer places on the event. I am using the traditional dating of the gospels, Matthew and Luke (AD 85-90), Mark (AD 66-70) and John (AD 90-110). The readings can be found Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24 and John 20 and each start on the first day after the Sabbath, (very) early in the morning as day breaks. There is no agreement who went to the tomb beyond Mary Magdalene who appears in Matthew, Mark and John). While all the accounts have concern that the stone at the entrance of the tomb will be an obstacle, it is only in Matthew that we learn that an angel moves it after a violent earthquake. Elsewhere is the stone has been rolled away or removed.

The first three gospels are clear that heavenly being(s) are present. Matthew refers to the angel while Mark has 'a young man dressed in white', and Luke refers to two men 'in clothes that gleamed like lightning'. The responses to the women in Matthew and Mark similarly assure them not to be afraid and explain that 'Jesus is not here but has risen' and to return to the disciples with the news. Luke does not give the assurance and does not name Jesus but agrees that he is 'not here; he has risen'. Luke reminds them of Jesus' words and offers no instruction to return to the disciples.

On their return to the disciples, Matthew says the women were 'filled with joy', while Mark says that they were 'trembling and bewildered' and Luke does not express the emotions. It is thought that Mark may have originally ended at this point, however the longer ending describes an encounter between Jesus and Mary Magdalene which, 'they did not believe'. Matthew has a sudden meeting with an instruction to 'Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me'. In Luke the appearance is by way of an

encounter with Cleopas on the Emmaus Road before appearing to the disciples.

Luke also has Peter running to the tomb to see for himself what was reported by the women. Neither Matthew nor Mark record this. The prominence of Peter is described in John who has Mary running to Simon Peter (and the beloved disciple) after finding the stone removed. Although slower than his younger friend, it is Peter who first looks into the tomb. Mary is left alone when the disciples return to their homes and following a conversation with two angels, Jesus (mistaken as a gardener) appears to her. She then tells the disciples and later in the evening Jesus appears to them in a locked room minus Thomas of course.

It is interesting that such a significant event is recorded differently. The essential truth is that Jesus was, is and always will be resurrected. We can also be sure that to prove the truth, he appeared in a number of different ways to the disciples and followers. His ascension may deny us the opportunity of a physical encounter with the risen Lord Jesus, but through the Holy Spirit we are assured of his presence. So let us affirm that Christ has died, Christ is risen and Christ will come again and celebrate this great alleluia moment in the Christian year!

Blessings

Extracts from a letter from Henrietta Blyth CEO of Open Doors - Eve Murfitt

Your prayers and support mean so much for our brothers and sisters who risk everything to follow Christ - thank you.

Once again North Korea is number one in the Open Doors World Watch list. In fact research shows that the persecution faced by the North Korean believers is worse than ever.

But courageous Open Doors fieldworkers are supporting North Korean believers through secret networks in China keeping 80,000 North Korean believers alive with vital food and aid as well as providing shelter and discipleship for refugees in China.

“ We have to take risks says Sister J an Open Doors fieldworker helping North Korean refugees “ But even through we know it is not safe we still have to do it. God loves each of the women so much.

She adds “ North Korean ladies never lose their hope. They are excited to know Jesus Christ even through they are still suffering and they are still hiding.”

You are really important to Sister J and the women she meets. “ We need a lot of prayers from supporters all over the world. “ she says.

Isn't it a privilege that we can stand alongside these persecuted believers - not just from North Korea but from many countries around the world. In the Open Doors World Watch list 360 million Christians face persecution and discrimination for their faith including believers in Nigeria, Afghanistan, Iran and more. Your prayers and support can mean these courageous believers and the next generation of the church can keep going.



MUSIC FESTIVAL

CELEBRATING
KING CHARLES III
CORONATION

Saturday 6th May
3-10pm
Along the River Walk
by Powers Hall End

Bands playing at the event include:

The Stents
The Fat Old Dad Band
6 String Makeover
Ginger and the Grizzly
Laura B and her Band

Food and drink stalls, DJ, children's entertainers,
amusement rides and much more

Strong Women of the Bible and their modern day Counterparts



Deborah - A Powerful Woman in the Bible

A prophetess and honoured judge, Deborah is one of the most awe-inspiring women of the Bible. A great role model for all for those called to lead. Deborah, "held court under the Palm of Deborah .. and the Israelites went up to her to have their disputes decided." (Judges 4:5).

One of the hallmarks of Deborah's leadership is her willingness to follow God's call and to give Him credit rather than leading out of her own strength. The song of Deborah reminds us that in the battles of life, we are not alone or unaided.

Deborah - being empowered to become a leader

Children are often referred to as the church of today and the leaders of tomorrow. And in Rwanda, a 16 year old Deborah is being empowered to become a leader through sponsorship which provides education and medical check-ups.

But ill health can quickly become a barrier to bright futures. "my children have agonised over amoebas, typhoid and worms, sometime three to four times a month. It's a common problem in many homes", shares Tamari, Deborah's mum. Thanks to intervention, Deborah and 244 other children received a water filter to curb the widespread water-borne infections of the project. Tamari is delighted in the change to her children's health as a result. Right now, I am just happy that Deborah's health is improving."

Martha - faith-filled woman of the Bible

A personal friend of Jesus, Martha lived in Bethany with her brother Lazarus and sister Mary. In John 11, Lazarus fell seriously ill and despite sending a message to Jesus asking for help, Lazarus passed away before Jesus arrives. However, Martha's absolute faith in Jesus shines through when she runs to meet him.

Jesus does the miraculous and resurrects Lazarus to complete and full health. How amazing it is witness that strength of faith, to be so convinced of God's provision and power. Through Martha's story we learn the importance of trusting God even when all seems lost.

Martha - a woman of determination

Martha from Indonesia is all a faith-filled woman whose strength in the face of adversity shines through,

When Martha was just five years old, she lost part of leg when she was hit by a motorcycle. She refused to let this horrible accident define or stop her. No matter what life throws at her, Martha is determined to give her children the best possible life.

Martha is part of Compassion's Survival programme in Indonesia.

"My children will have healthy bodies, they will not become malnourished. I apply the knowledge I received from the programme. I want to thank the implementers and co-ordinators of the programme for their efforts in taking care of us as mothers. They really are taking care of us and treat us in a special way".

EASTER SERVICES

April 2nd Palm Sunday -

10.30 Morning worship
with mini, kids and youth church.

April 6th Maundy Thursday

8pm Last Supper service in an upper room

April 7th Good Friday:

10.30 service in the sanctuary
followed by Hot Cross Buns

10.30 Messy Church for families with children.
(Ticketed event - tickets free from website)

April 9th Easter Sunday:

9.15 - 10.15am Easter breakfast

10.30 All Age service
of Easter celebration



Spring FAYRE

May 13th 2023

10:00 - 16:00

Witham United Reformed Church

The Church in the High Street

Witham, CM8 1AH

Live Music & Cream Teas

Local Crafters

Artisan Farmers Market



WURC

Witham United Reformed Church

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Minister | Minister | Lorna Bantock | 571757 |
| Children and Youth Pastor | Mrs | Viv Sollis | 500958 |
| Associate Children and Youth Pastor | Ms | Tracey Eagling | 500958 |
| Centre Manager | Mrs | Ana Martin | 500958 |
| Children & Youth Elder | Mr | Gavin McCall | |
| Church Secretaries (also Elders) | Mr Mrs | Tony Deighton and Muriel Heppinstall | 518866 |
| Discipleship Elder | Mr | David Wellings | |
| Mission and Growth Elders | Mrs Mr | Fenella Hardie Ian Hunt | |
| Pastoral Elder | Mrs | Sarah Wellings | |
| Property Elder | Mr | Billy Kennedy | |
| Church Treasurer (also Elder) | Mr | Ian Hardie | |
| Worship Elder | Mr | Keith Meredith | |
| Centre Director | Mrs | Fenella Hardie | |
| Kitchen Manager | Mrs | Heather March | 500958 |
| Community Cafe Pastoral co-ordinator | Mrs | Eve Murfitt | |
| Prayer Chain Co-ordinator | Mrs | Rosemary Stinson | 516602 |
| Pastoral Team Co-ordinator | Mrs | Ruth Blackett | 07546 838825 |
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