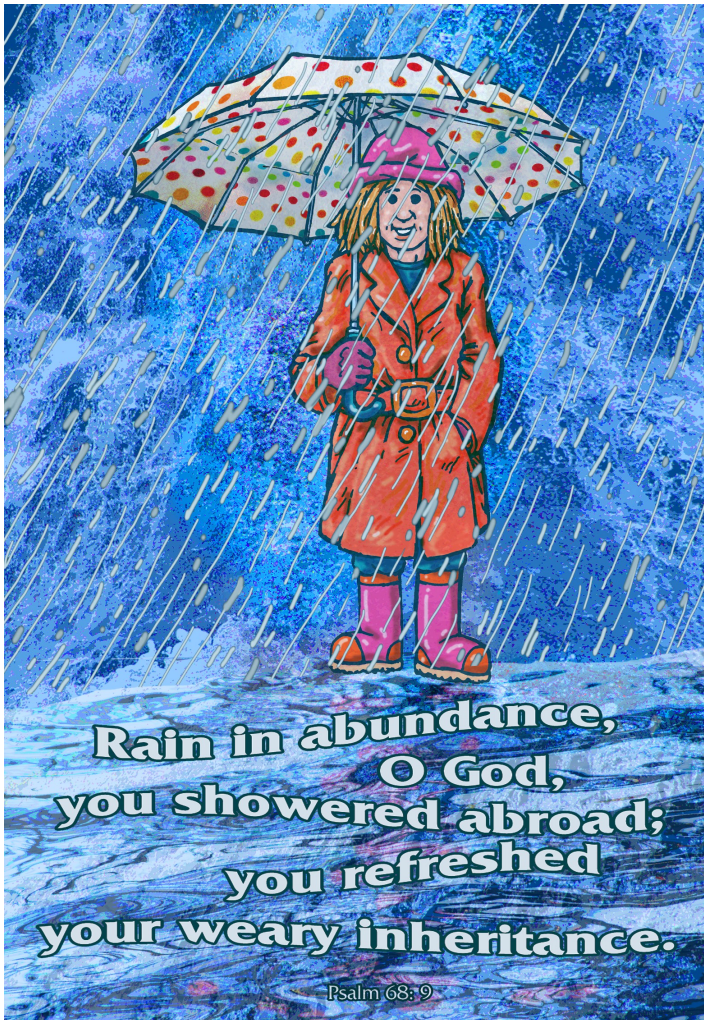


CHURCH MAGAZINE APRIL 2024



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

Pastoral Letter

Dear Friends,

Happy Easter!

We are Easter people! The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus give us the amazing privilege of a personal relationship with God, the creator of the universe. That's really exciting because he is the one who created us and therefore knows our potential with, and more importantly, in him. He has amazing plans for us; he knows what our gifts are and wants us to use them to the full for his kingdom. He has already planned, not only the good things for us to do (Ephesians 2:10), but also the people along the way who will teach, help and encourage us, not to mention those who will keep us accountable.

The same is true for our fellowship - God has plans for us. Amazing plans for us to be a beacon of light in our community, to enhance the flavour of our community, to be a channel of his love in our community. Such an opportunity! A challenge to of course, but principally an opportunity.

Every day God brings people to us, for any of a number of reasons among which our coffee and irresistible cake, to collect food that has been gifted to us or for one of the various activities that we run or host. *They* come to *us*, giving us the opportunity to share the love of Jesus with them and, gradually, as we talk to them and support them, pray with them and befriend them, they become more aware of our loving saviour Jesus which leads to the opportunity to invite them to find out more about him.

If you know of anyone who is on the fringe of faith or church, please pray about it and see if you are prompted to invite them to the Alpha course that starts on 17th April. After all, we have such an amazing gift in Christ to celebrate and share with others.

As Easter people we celebrate God's selfless sacrifice in Christ every day. Not just on Easter Sunday or at Easter but every single day. We have the new resurrection life that Jesus gives to those who put their trust in him. It's available to us every second of every day. With every breath we draw, the opportunity for a fresh start. With every breath we draw, a fresh opportunity to praise God and focus on him and his kingdom.

As a fellowship we are so blessed to have premises in a central position in the town and we really want to be known as the church in the High Street and a church that is active in the community. We are in a particularly exciting time, focusing on discerning God's will as we consolidate and expand our mission.

Spring is always the season of anticipation and hope, with buds appearing on plants, seeds germinating to send green shoots into the daylight and warmer days with longer daylight hours.

Everyone needs hope, everyone. As followers of Jesus we have hope. We have more than hope, we have faith, because we have confidence in what we hope for even though we cannot see it (Hebrews 11:1). As believers our horizon is not limited to what we see; it is unlimited, because God is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think (Ephesians 3:20).

That too is mega exciting and I look forward with eager anticipation to what God has in store for us over the coming months. I am realistic though - there will be obstacles and challenges which our faithful, loving father will help us overcome. Whatever happens, we can always look at everything through the lens of Easter - Jesus conquering death to bring us life everlasting in a place where there is no more darkness or death or sorrow or crying or pain (Revelation 21:4) in the sure and certain knowledge that

absolutely nothing, nothing, will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:38-39)

I sincerely hope that you will be blessed as you celebrate God's gift of new life to you every day for the rest of your life.

Yours in Christ,

Lorna

The Pledge - 52 Lives

This month we feature the charity 52 Lives which the Church has supported through the Pledge and nominated by Naomi Claxton.



What they do

'52 Lives aims to change someone's life every week of the year and spread kindness, with the help of almost 100,000 supporters. It is based on the simple premise that people are good, and lots of good people working together can achieve amazing things. We believe that kindness has the power to change people's lives, strengthen communities and ultimately change the world - while improving our own well-being at the same time.

Anyone can nominate someone in need of help (although the majority of our nominations come from front-line professionals, such as social workers, health workers, teachers, and other charities). Every week we choose someone to help, share their story, request what they need and our supporters help to change their life.

One of the things that makes 52 Lives unique is that 100% of what people give goes to the person we are helping each week. Not a penny is kept by 52 Lives (this is made possible thanks to the support of corporate partners and some generous individuals who choose to cover our costs).

52 Lives is supported by an amazing community of people, who help us to change lives every single week.'

Since the charity was started in 2013 it has helped with a huge variety of things from helping a homeless mother and son into a flat; building a sensory garden for a boy in Wales; buying carpet and furniture for women and children leaving refuges; sending cards and kind messages to children being bullied; providing computers to vulnerable children so they can access lessons; and giving beds to families who have been sleeping on the floor.

An example of how the charities helps.

"This week, we're trying to help a 20 year old man called Max, who has been homeless since he was 16. Growing up, Max was abused by his dad over a long period of time and left home four years ago. He has been living in hostels ever since.

Last year, his best friend sadly took her own life and Max was the one who found her. Max has depression, anxiety, PTSD and has been having thoughts of self-harming.

Max was nominated by his support worker. He said: "Max has just moved into his own flat. He is a really decent young man, with so much potential... very likeable and respectful but clearly vulnerable and nervous about the future." His support worker helped him to put together his CV last week and Max applied for four jobs - and has secured an interview for one already."He wants his life to be different and wants a better future. He knows he has to work, and is trying. But he needs help to create a home for himself."

The flat has white goods, a mattress and a TV stand – and that's it. And he has barely any clothes.

We'd like to help.

As well as lots of things for his home, Max is also going to need a bike to get to and from work, steel cap boots (he is applying for warehouse/manual work) and vouchers so he can buy some clothes."

- 1. YOU NOMINATE
SOMEONE IN NEED.**
- 2. WE HELP.**
- 3. THE WORLD CHANGES,
ONE LIFE AT A TIME...**

For further information see: 52-lives.org

Ancient Super foods... - Julie Harris

Dear all,

Just wanted to share this with you. On my recent holiday to Spain, with my husband, I made a few interesting discoveries, which lead me to do further research.

How it started....

I noticed that the Spanish, in general, don't use margarine, spread or butter...they appear to only use either Extra Virgin Olive Oil drizzled on their bread or in cooking. So I tried it myself, absolutely delicious whether on bread, or as a dressing, or to cook with. That is all I will use now, hugely healthy. The Bible makes reference to olive oil, for anointing and for use in lamps, to burn. I am not sure if in Jesus's time they would have used it for cooking, but there are records of Extra Virgin Olive Oil being used in 3,500 BC.

We also observed on holiday, the heavy use of garlic: it is only mentioned once in the Bible, but there are records dating back 5,000 BC that garlic was used. Yes, garlic can leave an odour on our breath but I observed the Spanish like to gently saute it, after removing the paper like skin, in Extra Virgin Olive Oil. I can confirm that this is an extremely delicious way to eat garlic.

It is very easy to grow your own garlic, just peel off the cloves, plant tip end upwards and wait patiently.

Last but not least honey. I was fascinated to learn the bee keeping process in a workshop session on holiday., Apparently a bee can travel up to 3 miles from the hive to do their important work; amazing little creatures.

Honey is referenced 61 times in the Bible and there are records of fossilised honey bees dating back 150 Million years, with references to bee keeping dating back to 7000 BC.

The sunflower is like gold for native bees, including honey bees, solitary bees, and bumblebees. Both find the yellow sundial of plants to be like a buffet full of nectar and pollen.

Since returning home, I have made adjustments to the way we eat incorporating these 3 power foods. I have, in my ignorance, been eating very unhealthy foods but I have made tweaks and am trying to eat healthier.

Did you know all three of these super foods are anti inflammatory and could aid arthritis as well as a whole raft of other health conditions. I want to be healthier and encourage my husband to eat these three super foods so no guesses for as to what is in our cupboards and vegetable rack.

On that note I would like to mention rather than buying sunflowers for your garden already grown, why not enjoy the pleasure of seeing seedlings grow. I will be growing sunflower seedlings, and when they are ready I will let you know, 80p each, all proceeds to WURC. Think of it as a way of helping the bees and the planet.

Please come and have a chat if you would like any tips on growing your own.

Every blessing.

GEAR Prayer power points provided by Eve Murfitt.

Week beginning 31st March please pray for

Easter Sunday Worship.

1st April: Revidge Fold and Trinity Brownhill URC's as they officially merge together to form North Blackburn URC today.

Spring Harvest at Skegness (1st-5th April).

Ministers taking time off after the busy Easter season.

The persecuted Church, for all those facing hostilities, violence, imprisonment and the threat of death, especially at this time of the year

Week beginning 7th April please pray for:

Spring Harvest at Minehead (8-12th April).

Local team in Wessex to be able to set up a Leading your Church into Growth (LyCiG) series on Saturdays - the venue with the right dates can be found; for Rev Ashley Evans and team as they adapt the course to fit the local need; the attendees to be enthused and equipped, and for growth to follow.

Ashley as he takes up his new role in West Midlands Synod alongside his work in Yorkshire, rolling out LyCiG.

Week beginning 14th April please pray for:

16th: Northwestern Ministers' away day.

17th-21st Dunamis Project #1: Gateways to Empowered Ministry, the Canterbury Dunamis Project.

19-20th: Prayer Sabbath at Shanklin, spending quality time in God's presence together and seeking his priorities for the coming months.

20th: for the Romans 1.11 Trust Trustees as they meet.

Week beginning 21st April please pray for:

27th: Rotherham, as Herringthorpe URC and Christians across the town gather to pray for God's kingdom to come in South Yorkshire.

27th: Lancashire Elders' away day, that it will be a day of learning and refreshment

Those serving on Youth and Children teams, including within Synod committees as they serve young people around the URC

Week beginning 28th April please pray for:

2nd May: The Police Chaplain's induction training at Greater Manchester Police.

4th: Wessex Synod Big Day Out at Hollycombe Steam in the Country.

Herringthorpe URCs Children & Youth Project, as our young people grow in faith. Pray for God's wisdom and leading, and for deepening discipleship.

Copies of the GEAR magazine can be found in the rack by the Centre door

TUESDAY PRAISE APRIL

at Witham URC

EVERYBODY WELCOME

TIME: 12.30 - 1pm

LEADER

2nd Gretta Bray

9th Keith Ives

16th Noah Cockett

23rd Lorna Bantock

30th Stephen Northfield

Table top Plant sale in support of Christian Aid - Julie Harris

I will be organicing a tabletop plant sale in May, at the Church, in aid of Christian Aid. Date to be confirmed. If you have any plants, unused seeds, pots, or anything garden related, please consider donating them.



Please come and have a chat if you have any donations or if you are able to help on the day.

Trinity Open Day Saturday 13th April



**Come and take a tour to the stunning light-tower and look
around our historic ship and see the amazing transformation
following extensive remodelling
10:30 – 16:00 (High tide: 16:37 4.7m)
Free all are welcome**





Celtic Style Service April 21st at 6.30pm

Celtic worship stretches our understanding of what it means to be a follower of Jesus. It often uses a written liturgy with responses by those present. Why not come along and try a different style of worshipping?

Annoying Stuff! Bob Stibbards

Being offered a seat on the underground.

People now give their seat up for me which is very kind but it makes me feel old; no response needed to that please. However I take comfort in that this happened to my niece recently who is about 30 years younger than me who does not look her age and is very slim being offered a seat.

Ai

I thought this was the road to the north until recently!

Modern car headlights.

They are so dazzling, but I am not going to become a recluse and not go out in the dark.

Swerve that rut.

I spend loads of time avoiding potholes, but try moving to the middle of the road and there are yet more holes evidenced by a split in an off side tyre on my car and failing an MOT.

Driving manners.

Gaining a millisecond is sooooo important to some.

E tickets

Not entirely convinced that these will work when you need them!

Your call is important to us.

You are number 8 in the queue. It takes ages to get to the number 1 spot and along the way you constantly reminded that your call is important to us then a really long wait until you are transferred.

Online purchases.

How would you rate your courier - He left the parcel on the doorstep and drove away at speed and I never saw him ! Or within minutes of a delivery being asked in an email to rate the item you have just received and not opened - the delete button comes in handy.

QR codes for everything.

What is wrong with paper manuals,

"I going to cut off your broadband."

Annoying people trying to scam you at 8.00 am. Put down the phone and they redial using a different number.

Misplacing items.

Putting an item down and within 10 seconds not having a clue where it is !

An evening out.

Well I like to give a treat to Jo so when a friend of ours organised a charity fund raiser recently we went along. We had managed to avoid a previous event by buying tickets and donating some items but he persuaded us to go along this time as the band was made up of some of his friends from school. Well let's say there was a very mature audience, fortunately no ambulances had to be called out. The dance floor gave me a glimpse of what one companies cruise evening entertainment might look like, oh dear. So we sat glued to our seats eating a couple of very large bags of crisps, one of which was stale, drinking zero alcohol beer and watching the clock until there were enough people on the dance so we could leave without anybody noticing! Not to be repeated anytime soon!

Revd Dr Peter Stevenson from Jean Moody, Great Totham URC

On 1st April we might be more alert for those trying to convince us of a ridiculous fact or event. Some have proposed that the modern custom of All Fool's Day originated in France, officially with the Edict of Roussillon (promulgated in August 1564), in which Charles IX decreed that the new year would no longer begin on Easter, as had been common throughout Christendom, but rather on January 1. Because Easter was a lunar and therefore moveable date, those who clung to the old ways were the "April Fools." Others have suggested that the timing of the day may be related to the vernal equinox (March 21), a time when people are fooled by sudden changes in the weather.

There are variations between countries in the celebration of April Fools' Day, but all have in common an excuse to make someone play the fool. In France, for example, the fooled person is called *poisson d'avril* ("April fish"), perhaps in reference to a young fish and hence to one that is easily caught; it is common for French children to pin a paper fish to the backs of unsuspecting friends. In Scotland the day is Gowkie Day, for the gowk, or cuckoo, a symbol of the fool. In many countries newspapers and the other media participate in false headlines or news stories.

I wonder how the early church viewed the story about Jesus being resurrected from the tomb? Paul later suggests that the message is, "... foolishness to those who are perishing.." (1 Cor 1:18) and continues,

22 Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom,**23** but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, **24** but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. **25** For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise (v27). Perhaps we are foolish when we question the meaning of the cross as a sign of God's love for all creation, that means you and me!

Blessings

Preachers at Great Totham URC in April

April 7th. Ian Hardie.
April 14th. Rev. Lythan Nevard.
April 21st. Rev. Mark Ambrose
April 28th Ian Hardie, includes communion.

We are delighted to invite the Rev. Lythan Nevard to lead our service on the 14th, Lythan is the Moderator of the Eastern area of the URC.

All are welcome to join us, our services begin at 10:30 , you are also welcome to our coffee morning on Saturday 13th April beginning at 10am. You will find us in Chapel Road, Great Totham North . CM9 8DA.

For the explorers,
open-minded,
still thinking,
curious.

Witham United Reformed Church

17th April
for 12 weeks

Meal included
7.30 - 9.30pm

Stay
Curious
Try
Alpha



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
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