



WITHAM URC CHURCH MAGAZINE

May 2022

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

Pastoral letter - Looking Forward

Dear Friends

The air is a buzz, not just with wildlife, not simply the lovely colours of spring flowers but with expectation. People, at last are planning to travel, to visit and unleash their long suppressed ideas for the future. Audrey and I met a friend yesterday who hadn't been able to see her son in South Africa for 2 years. She said with glee, "I've booked it and I'm flying on Tuesday". As we emerge from the terrible effects of the Covid-19 pandemic we are bursting with hope.

Now, I am not ignoring the terrible events unfolding in Ukraine and the suffering being inflicted on innocent people at the whim of a tyrant. We must hope and pray that, with help from like-minded people in Europe, peace and justice will prevail.

We have been remembering the suffering and death of Jesus at Easter. From that horror came the miraculous resurrection of our Saviour and thereafter, the gift of the Holy Spirit and the founding of the Christian Church. All those who had been inspired by Jesus and his disciples became part of a movement from which modern Christendom developed.

Human failings, however lead to different views of events and, as we all do, gaps in knowledge tend to be filled with ideas that may be inaccurate. Disputes and arguments within and between churches are never far away now and in the past. Fortunately for the early Church, Paul galvanised and chided members of new churches to remember the teachings of Jesus. The letters that Paul wrote to the people in cities and communities in the eastern Mediterranean, such as Corinth, Ephesus and Philippi served to guide and encourage the new Christians along their path with Jesus. He exhorts the people to be sure that everything they do is to the Glory of God.

I like to draw a parallel with enthusiasts who do their own car maintenance. In the past such petrol-heads needed the appropriate Hayes Manual to do that. Paul's letters are not so prescriptive but I like the idea that Paul's letters are the guides for life.

In our modern Church we must look forward and treasure the joys that surround us. Keeping our eyes on what Jesus taught us and how he suffered for us must be our focus. Let us be inclusive and welcoming but temper our actions with the examples set for us by Jesus, his disciples and the wise counsel of Paul.

May the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Billy Kennedy

Witham Festival - Muriel Heppinstall

On 17th September the Town Council is holding the successor to the Puppet Festival. At present no details are available but we are thinking of putting on an exhibition of wedding dresses in the church sanctuary that day.

This is very much in the early stages but we need to know if we can lay our hands on enough wedding dresses to make it worthwhile.

If you have a wedding dress you would be willing to lend, please let Muriel Heppinstall know as soon as possible. The older the better, and ideally with a photo of the bride wearing it.

If we can have promises of enough dresses we would display them on mannequins on tables in the sanctuary and I hope it will draw people into the church building.



(PS. So do you think I look like my Dad ? Ok he had more hair but so did I when I was 30 ! Bob Stibbards)



2nd April 2022 Shopping List

Urgent:

Tea (80 max)
Tinned Spaghetti
Instant Mash
Packet Soup
Long Life Juice (1 litre pack)
Shampoo

To Maintain Stocks:

Tinned Tomatoes
Tinned Vegetables
Sponge Pudding (Twin Pack)
Jam
Tinned Cold Meat (Spam etc)
Sugar
Coffee
Long Life Milk (1 litre pack)
Laundry Detergent (Liquid or pods)

Strong Carrier Bags

We follow the Food Standards Agency standards. We can only accept donations of unopened and undamaged goods well within their "use by" date. Items that do not meet these requirements cannot be used and your donation may be wasted.

www.braintreearea.foodbank.org.uk
info@braintreearea.foodbank.org.uk

Registered Charity in England & Wales (1148782)



Well done Great Totham URC. I noticed this on their noticeboard. - Bob Stibbards



Cygnus Trio Charity Concert

In support of the House of Grace, a local charity supporting homeless people.



**Javier Montanana, violin, Hannah Lewis, cello
Cesar Saura, piano**

This greatly admired ensemble return to play rarely heard masterpieces by Beethoven and Tchaikovsky.

Witham URC church on 28th May 2022, 7.30p.m.

*

Admission free, but please donate generously!
Refreshments served afterwards.

Will you?





Would you help us help them?
House of Grace Witham is aiming to provide
supported accommodation in our
community.

WHO?

‘House of Grace (Witham)’ is a new local Christian charity working in partnership with the national social enterprise ‘Green Pastures’ to provide supported housing for those needing help to ‘get back on their feet’ after suffering homelessness.

WHAT?

We will lease a house bought by ‘Green Pastures’ and find residents from referral agencies. Residents’ housing benefit will pay for the lease and a team of volunteers will maintain the property and provide practical courses for them. We expect residents to be ready to move on after about eighteen months in the ‘House of Grace’.

HOW?

We will need to raise funds to equip and maintain the property. We would also look to fund residents who access courses provided by other organisations, e.g. carpentry.

We will also offer therapeutic sessions in learning to play the guitar or keyboard and/or attend an art or craft session

Some residents will need to learn about budgeting and handling their finances in general.

Two friends could become volunteers to befriend and support the same resident, in case one goes on holiday or needs to isolate etc so there will always be a backup system in place.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

1. Make a cash donation at the end of the concert using the offering plates provided. If you prefer to make a bank transfer, here are our bank details:
Sort code: 30-96-26 Acc: 78633368
Ref: House of Grace.
2. If you would like to receive future newsletters, please add your name and email address to the “Friends of House of Grace” form available.

*

We are planning to hold an open meeting later in the year when a speaker from ‘Green Pastures’ will be invited and there will be a time for discussion and questions

*

More information from Emmelia Van der Walt on
em.vanderwalthouseofgrace@gmail.com

Tuesday Praise - May 2022

3rd - Richard Wearmouth

10th - Christine Newmarch

17th - Lorna Bantock

24th - Vicky Zarb

31st - Olufemi Cole-Njie

15-21 May 2022 - Christian Aid Week

**We're raising our voices to call for climate justice.
Together, we can restore justice to our world.**



Saturday 14th May 9.30 – 12.00

Cakes - Plants - Toys - Children's clothes

DONATIONS & HELP NEEDED!

Cakes; Plants; Good condition children's clothes and toys
Help setting up from 8.30am, manning stalls, serving refreshments and clearing up.

Let Gavin McCall know as soon as possible if you can lend a hand: gavin.mccall@withamurc.org.uk

15-21 May 2022

Christian Aid Week

Christian Aid Week help turn hunger into hope. Hope lives in you.

Jessica Mwedzi smiles with love for her children as she stirs a single bowl of porridge for them...

...But she knows they're hungry for more. This one bowl of porridge is all she and her family can eat today: 'My children crave a decent meal, but I can't provide. We often go to bed on an empty stomach. It pains me to send them to bed hungry.'

Women are at the mercy of climate change and hunger.- Jessica.



Jessica (right) poses outside her house with 3 of her children -

'So painful and disheartening'

For Jessica, drought means every day is a struggle for survival.

Like many women in rural Zimbabwe - 7 out of 10 rely on farming for income and food - she toils on her farm, but nothing can grow on her ashen, dry land.

Drought starves. Intensified by the climate crisis, and the effects of war in Ukraine on global food production, it drives families into hunger.

Jessica recalls that 'One year, we had no rain. The scorching sun burnt my crops just as they were about to bloom. It was so painful and disheartening.'

You can help this loving mum turn hunger into hope

It's unjust that drought - exacerbated by the effects of conflict and the global pandemic - robs Jessica of the power to provide for her family. Her husband is unwell, so she's the only breadwinner. Her children look up to her, but she has nothing left to give. Once before, when things were desperate, Jessica asked her neighbours for food but she came home with nothing.

Jessica is anything but helpless. In the face of drought, her love for her family gives her courage to stand strong - and we stand with Jessica.

My children give me the power to go ahead... I pray they have a better future.



May Fellowship Walk

This month we intend to do a circular walk from Terling to Fairstead church & back on Saturday 21st May, a distance of about 3 miles. Meet at 'The Dismals' by Terling village hall at 10.00am. Owls Hill Tea Room is just by the finish line!

Please let Muriel Heppinstall know if you would like to come. We will try to arrange transport so we use the minimum number of cars.



Our April Walk - Blake's Wood

Join us for
Afternoon Tea
Monday May 9th at 2.30pm
(note: this is the second Monday
as the first is a Bank Holiday)

Sandwiches, scones
with Tiptree jam & cream
Home-made Cakes

Price: £5.00

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



Mae Campbell would like the church family to know she has now moved into a care home. Her address has been updated on Church suite. She would like to thank people for their care and concern.



**Forecourt Sale in WURC car park in aid of
Farleigh Hospice
Saturday 21st May 9.30am to midday**

Cakes - Plants - Bric-a-Brac - Toys

**DONATIONS OF ABOVE ITEMS AND HELP
WELCOMED**

**Please contact Christine Huggett, details on Church Suite,
as soon as possible.**

A short ghost story - Bob Stibbards

For some reason the celebration of our 30th wedding anniversary had been deferred for two years and we booked a restaurant with rooms in Lavenham. A difficult decision for me as our wedding anniversary fell on the same night as the WURC gentlemen's evening, so I gave a polite excuse, but will have to come up with a different one next time!

We had not been to Lavenham for some time and rather than look at a map book, yes I still have one, thought it easier to use the sat nav in the car, big mistake! My front seat driver has on several occasions said that the sat nav in my car is rubbish and that the Waze App is so much better which I have chosen to ignore. It has taken us on some very odd routes at times, down very narrow country lanes, but on this occasion it surpassed itself and a journey that should have taken just under an hour took nearly double that and we seemed to be going round in circles. I now totally agree with Jo that it is rubbish!

Now to the point of my story. The restaurant had asked if we were celebrating a special occasion and I mentioned that it was our wedding anniversary and when the dessert arrived it seemed worth taking a photo of.. We had left our phones in the bedroom so I went up to get one. The hotel still uses keys, and not the modern fob or card system, as it only has a few bedrooms.

I opened the door of the bedroom leaving the key in the lock outside but when I tried to get out I could not get out of the room. Having shaken the door handle a number of times I saw that it was mysteriously locked! How could that happen? What to do? I rang the hotel reception from the telephone in the room with no reply. So I thought I would try their land line but the only reply I got was that if I would like to make a reservation to send an email, which did not seem a good idea.

I was starting to panic thinking . How do I got out of the room on the first floor without going down the drainpipe of a listed building? How long would it take for Jo to miss me or perhaps she thought I had fallen asleep in the bedroom? She could see that I had not done a runner as our car could be seen from the restaurant. I tried the telephone in the room again and this time after a long wait it was answered and I said rather lamely that I was locked in our room. It was quickly unlocked but something made me think that this had happened before and with the building dating back to the 14th century do I now.... believe in ghosts?



Our anniversary pud

Assis Brief Update March 2022.- item provided by Eve Murfitt

We have really appreciated your prayers during the last year. We are very pleased to say that we will finally be coming to England in May and June this year.

During November and December we were preparing for the Christmas musical that went very well in our local square in Reriutaba.

We also held a baptismal joint service where 7 were baptised and 7 more were accepted as members. One lovely thing that has happened in Reriutaba is that couples that have been living together for some years are wanting to get their lives right with God. So, in December Izaias married one couple and inspired another couple to do the same.

Our Latin Link Team Conference was in Anapolis this year and also on online which went really well.

240 students have enrolled this year. Please pray that the staff can get a good balance between being a professional school and a Christian school.

Please pray that we will be able to see everybody we need to see during our time in England.

Every blessing

Izaias and Ruth.

Items for the June Church magazine please to bjstibbards@gmail.com by 23rd May. Thank you

Praying for Putin

Word for the Week Old Testament

Not a word from their mouth can be trusted;
 Their heart is filled with malice.
 Their throat is an open grave;
 with their tongues they tell lies.

Psalm 5:9

Remind you of anyone?

There's nothing like a real-life dictator who's indifferent to the misery and mayhem he wreaks to bring David's conflict psalms to life. Indeed, whilst it is deeply unwise to suppose that God is on any particular side in a war, there are times when, despite our own sinfulness and rebellion, the evil of one side is so clear that we can be as sure as any human can that God stands against it. 'The bloodthirsty and the deceitful you, Lord, detest.' (Psalm 5:6)

How we then pray for Putin is another question. In the weeks before the war, I prayed that God might raise up an Esther to whisper restraint into his life. I prayed that God might humble him as he humbled Nebuchadnezzar. And I hoped that the Lord in his mercy was not using him like the King of Assyria to discipline us for our rebellion (Isaiah 7:17).

As ever, the psalms help us pray.

First, we must be honest, as David is – calling out the actions and attitudes of his enemies as he sees them. Putin is a self-absorbed, conscience-less, cunning despot and many of us have no doubt felt, as Bonhoeffer did in

relation to Hitler, that his death would be the swiftest way to reduce the suffering of literally tens of millions of people. I find no contradiction in praying for his salvation and his removal from power, though I find myself unable to ask for his death.

Second, the psalmists are honest with God about their vengeful, murderous feelings towards their enemies. We may well have similar feelings. And whilst it is right to repent of them swiftly, it is also right to express them to God – he knows anyway. And when we don't process such feelings about our enemies, it only gets harder to genuinely want God's best for them.

Third, David reminds us that we are not in control. God is. And justice will indeed one day be done. In the meantime, we pray for a swift resolution to the war, the protection of the innocent, wisdom and courage for our leaders, homes for the refugees, and healing for all from the sulphuric ravages of this diabolic tyranny.

Mark Greene
Mission Champion, LICC

Wood Anenomes and Blue Bells, South Wood, Great Totham



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Associate Children and Youth Pastor	Ms	Tracey Eagling	500958
Centre Managers	Mrs	Rocio MacDonald and Ana Martin	500958
Children & Youth Elder	Mr	Keith Meredith	
Church Secretaries (also Elders)	Mr Mrs	Tony Deighton and Muriel Heppinstall	518866
Discipleship and Growth Elder	Mrs	Sarah Campbell	
Mission and Outreach Elder	Mr	Gavin McCall	
Property Elders	Mr Mrs	Billy Kennedy and Rocio MacDonald	
Church Treasurer (also Elder)	Mr	Ian Hardie	
Worship Elder	Mrs	Fenella Hardie	
Centre Director	Mrs	Fenella Hardie	
Kitchen Manager	Mrs	Heather March	500958
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