

WITHAM URC CHURCH MAGAZINE

May 2023

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

Pastoral Letter

Dear Friends.

Bob Stibbards kindly sent me a reminder a couple of weeks ago that my Pastoral Letter was due in. (It felt like being reminded my science homework was overdue. Although Bob is actually getting a letter from me. My science teacher is still waiting!)

I told him I had no idea what I was going to write about this month and I got a tongue in cheek response suggesting “Spending your time wisely.” Something very appropriate to me generally, but especially at the moment, where my personal, voluntary and work commitments seem to be multiplying!

In order to **save time** I thought I’d do a quick google search to see what others had to say on using our most precious resource wisely and Billy Graham had written exactly the piece I was looking for, and had done a much better job than I ever could. No matter how much time I had...

It’s trite but still true: We all have exactly the same number of minutes in a day. The question is, how can we use our time wisely? Let me suggest four steps I have found helpful.

First, see each day as a gift from God. *Instead of seeing each day as a burden, see it instead as another opportunity God has given you to serve Him. Time isn’t inexhaustible, nor can we assume we’ll always have more; someday our time on earth will end. The psalmist said, “My times are in your hands” (Psalm 31:15). The first thing we should do when we awake is thank God for the gift of another day.*

Second, commit your time to God. *God gave it to you for a reason: not to be wasted or mishandled, but to be used for His glory. We are accountable to Him for the way we use our time, and once a minute passes, it can never be reclaimed. The Bible says, “Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom” (Psalm 90:12).*

How can we put this into action? It may mean asking God to help us schedule our time more wisely and efficiently. It may mean rethinking how we spend our time, and then adjusting it to reflect God's priorities. We may also need to examine why we're so busy (or so bored). Is what we are doing really necessary – or are we simply trying to impress others? We can't do everything, and we need to say "no," if some activity isn't God's will.

Third, set aside time for God and for others. *No Christian would say, "I'm too busy for God," but how often have you gone through a whole day without even thinking about Him (let alone praying or reading the Bible)? How often have you ignored someone who needed your encouragement or help?*

Why is this? One reason is because we relegate God to our spare time – but end up never having any spare time! In other words, we mentally list everything we have to do and put God at the bottom of the list. But the opposite should be the case. Jesus said, "Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33, emphasis added).

Finally, take time for your own needs. *We all need rest and recreation; God made us this way. Some people feel guilty if they take a vacation or even a few hours off, but they shouldn't. In the midst of an incredibly busy schedule, Jesus told His disciples, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest" (Mark 6:31). If Jesus required times of rest, don't we also? Someone who is chronically exhausted from lack of sleep or improper eating is much more susceptible to Satan's attacks.*

So let us all pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ, for wisdom in how we prioritise our time, for strength to say no to what is not God's work and for the ease of conscience when we take restorative time for ourselves.

Yours in Christ.

Keith... and Billy Graham

A few words from Spring Harvest April 2023

George and Ann Haste

What a lovely few days to spend with six thousand other Christians. The joy of being in one building with the vibration, stimulation and elation, celebrating with 2,000 others, praising the name of Jesus and the love of God, with music and singing, it is very uplifting !!.



Another part of the full programme at SPRING HARVEST was the testimony by an Indian chef who started life in the slum existence of open sewers and little food - if any. We shall call him Rashi. His Mother was married at the age of 14 and gave birth to Rashi before her 15th birthday. His Mother kept the family alive by her devotion and care throughout terrible conditions. When Rashi was aged five, the charity COMPASSION, came into the village where they lived.. This changed Rashi's life as he would now receive education and he and his parents were checked out medically and brought out of the indignity of living in slum conditions.

This chef Rashi, while giving his testimony on a large stage, walking back and forth, was also cooking and giving instructions to his audience for a large tasty curry he was preparing. He had an easy flowing rapport with his audience, while reciting all the things his loving mother had drilled into him about cooking, while also speaking of his love of Jesus Christ and the wonderful work of the charity Compassion. How it had all made such a change in his family's original village. He also mentioned that one of his many memorable moments was when he came home from school one day and he was able to teach his father how to write his own name.

Listening to Rashi's easy flowing life story, fluctuating from one subject to another brought home to the 250 people present, what great work

Compassion has been doing for many years throughout the world and also in our own URC congregation here at Witham.

Spring Harvest April 2023 was a special experience - like being in a village or town where everyone else attends Church and attempts to lead a spirit filled existence.

Praise the Lord.

The Pledge

Each year our Church has given a percentage of its income to charitable causes nominated by our Pledge Committee and agreed by Church Meeting.

If there is charity that you are passionate about and would like to put forward the Pledge Committee would be pleased to hear from you.

To enable requests to be considered please send details by **31st May 2023** to include, if possible, web page links to pledge@withamurc.org.uk or for paper copies please leave in the rack labelled 'Pledge Committee' in the room next to the store for the organ console.

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





Budgeting For Joy With Holdfast **Naomi Claxton**

“For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.' ” — Jeremiah 29:11

Amidst the unrest in the wider world it can sometimes be easy to lose sight of this, and to become pulled down and feel as though we have the weight of the world on our shoulders. While we cannot ignore the challenges of climate change and world events, it is important to bolster ourselves and to choose to cultivate joy in our lives to help bring light in the darkness to those around us, and to live out God’s purpose for us. One of my favourite Christian writers, Sally Clarkson, wrote ‘Cultivating habits that sustain our lives and fill us with joy is one way we have learned to move forward every day’ and I hold these wise words close.

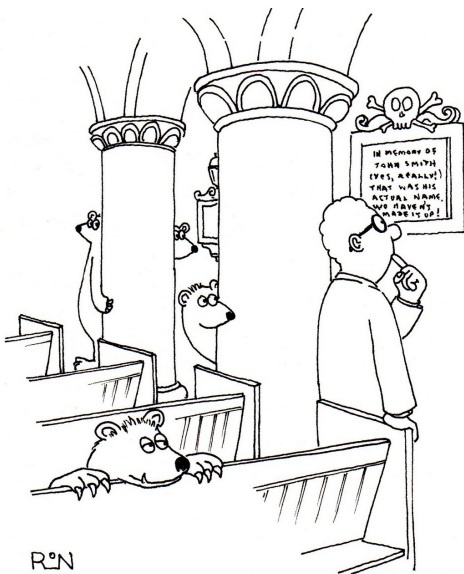
There is a lot of joy to be had for free – on the walk to work recently I spotted a rabbit sitting eating grass by the river, and it definitely lifted my spirits. I know that looking for the first snowdrop, the first crocus, and the first daffodil of the season will bring me joy that costs nothing. Making the time to make my tea in the pot and drink it from my cup and saucer with a lit candle – free joy. Other joys come with a cost, and one of the main reasons people can struggle with budgeting is forgetting to allow for joy in their budgets. The lunch with a friend, the new book, the visit to the cinema. We all have our particular pleasures, and it is really important to make allowances for them where our budget allows it.

However, in our own community there are people in financial hardship who are struggling to meet the basic costs of living and don’t have the luxury of stretching their budget to accommodate joy. When even covering the cost of your groceries is a worry, it is hard to even consider joy. Even if things are not as bad as that, the worry of knowing that an unexpected cost could

derail you financially is draining. Joy should be for everyone, not just those without money worries, and you can help make this happen.

Holdfast offers small loans – smaller than those offered by most high street banks – to members of our community. When something goes wrong in their life, we can make the difference to them. We can be the barrier between someone finding their feet financially or ending up in the clutches of loan sharks. You can help us by saving with us. When we have members making small regular savings it helps us to reach out and help more members of our community who need it. Your money is completely safe, and you benefit from free life insurance. Joining is really quick and easy, and you will add to your own joy knowing that you are helping strengthen your community.

If you would like to know more, there is lots of information on our website www.holdfastcreditunion.co.uk where you can also join, or you can email us at office@holdfastcreditunion.co.uk or pop up and have a cup of tea with us.



*Dennis spent a long time in church
looking for his forbears*

Storecupboard Saver Spring Lunch by our own Masterchef.

Now the weather is turning brighter and sunnier, it seems to lend itself to having lunch in the garden, or with friends. **This savoury tart** is a proper storecupboard staple, quick, easy and cheap to make - but it looks like you've made a real effort. It freezes well, and is also very adaptable, so you can make use of whatever veg you may have in the garden (or in my case the bottom drawer of the fridge). At current supermarket prices, this costs £1.75 for the basic tart to feed four people, plus the cost of baking it - about another 14p. I haven't costed the additions to the filling for the tart, as I always use what I have on hand, or leftovers. You could serve this with salad, and feed four for about 50p a head, while it feeling like you have spent more time and effort than you have!



Pastry

You could use your favourite shortcrust recipe here, or a packet from the shops, but this recipe is so quick and easy, give it a try.

200g self raising flour (11p)

100ml oil (I use rapeseed) (25p)

75ml cool water (you may need a little more or less)

You can add herbs or spices here if you fancy it - nigella seeds are particularly nice with a spiced filling.

Put all the pastry ingredients into a bowl, stir until it comes together as pastry, roll out on a floured worktop (or between two pieces of greaseproof paper)

Use to line a tart or quiche dish, or four individual tins. Pop it in the fridge while you make the filling.

Filling

200g soft cheese - like Philadelphia (but I use the cheap own brand kind. It has a really long life so you can keep a tub in the fridge on standby) (83p)
2 eggs (56p)

Mix these two together, and then add whatever you like to it. Here are some that I have made recently:

- Diced carrot boiled until soft, crushed garlic, cumin seeds, coriander and turmeric (or curry powder)
- Spring onions, diced leftover cooked new potatoes, peas, and ham
- Diced fried onion, peas, smoked salmon trimmings (I have sometimes also blended leftover salmon sandwich filling in)
- Any leftover green vegetables diced up, and some strong cheddar

To Finish

Put your finished filling into the pastry case, then bake at 180 fan or gas mark 6 for about 30 minutes. You can serve it hot or cold, and leftovers freeze well.

FIRE! ENERGY AND PASSION!



CYGNUS TRIO PLAY MUSIC FROM SPAIN
AND FRANCE

JAVIER MONTANANA, VIOLIN,
HANNAH LEWIS, CELLO
CESAR SAURA, PIANO

IN SUPPORT OF THE HOUSE OF GRACE, A LOCAL
CHARITY SUPPORTING HOMELESS PEOPLE.

WITHAM URC CHURCH ON
20TH MAY 2023, 7.30P.M.

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REFRESHMENTS AFTER THE CONCERT

Tomatoes for sale in aid of Church funds - Julie Harris

The salad season will soon be upon us...how nice would it be to venture outside into your garden and harvest your own home grown tomatoes.



I don't know about you, but I don't find supermarket tomatoes very flavoursome...I had great success last year with an abundance of them.

Just a few tips, if you have a huge crop of them, you could fry them in Olive oil, and serve them on toast, or make chutney, or add to Pasta dishes...the possibilities are endless, and even if a tomato is spoilt and no longer edible, you can still save the seeds and dry them for next year.

In fact, if you are very patient and willing to take the time to harvest and dry seeds, you could continuously keep yourself in tomatoes for the rest of your life....well....if we get some sunshine you could.

I am always happy to give advice on all aspects of growing, fertilising, thinning out, growing on and the harvesting of the seeds....so come on over if you see me around and I would be very happy to share what I know.

All proceeds will go to the Church, the tomato plants are 6 for £5, and the varieties I am growing are as follows, if you are on a low income, you can have some free plants, here are the varieties;

Yellow Vine

Cerise Red

Golden Sunrise

And....last but not least....the beautiful striking Indigo Rose

Tomatoes are extremely healthy and I promise you mine are very tasty, if you would like some, when they are ready, please telephone me, my number is in the Church directory...signing off now...to make my own Comfrey tea fertiliser....if you want some Comfrey or advice on how to make the fertiliser, you know where I am

Spring Blessings

TUESDAY PRAISE

MAY 2023

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LEADER</u>
2nd May	Songs of Praise
9th May	Femi Cole-Njie
16th May	Christine Newmarch
23rd May	Lorna Bantock
30th May	Gretta Bray

TIME: 12.30PM

Easter Photographs - Mary Goodwin





Join us for
Afternoon Tea
Monday
June 5th
at 2.30pm

Sandwiches,
scones with Tiptree jam
& cream

Home-made Cakes

Price: £6.00

Booking with the Centre office
is essential

Witham 900958



Clean and Green - Naomi Claxton

Last month I touched on the fact that it is more expensive to choose the most eco friendly option when buying milk – organic milk in a glass bottle costs £1.48 a pint, and non-organic milk in a plastic bottle costs £1.15 a pint, and across a month that adds up, so I have a few pints a month in glass bottles and the rest in plastic. I am doing what I can as far as my budget will allow.

The good news is that the most eco friendly option is not always the most expensive – it can very often save your money and time. One example is home made cleaning products. If you have even a passing interest in being kind to our planet, keeping your money in your purse, and making the best out of a job that few of us look forward to, making your own cleaning products is an excellent starting point. I was inspired by Nancy Birtwhistle (she won the Great British Bake Off a few years ago) who has now published three books on living well, living green, and for less. She widely shares her recipe for her ‘Pure Magic’ cleaning spray, and I am sharing it here because it is SO effective (as well as being cheap and eco friendly)

Put 200g citric acid crystals in a heatproof measuring jug, and pour over 150ml of just boiled water. Stir really well until completely dissolved, then add 20ml eco friendly washing up liquid, and 10-20 drops of tea tree oil. Mix it really well, then allow to cool. Pour into a spray bottle and it is ready to use:

- Clean the toilet (without hurting the fishes!)
- Dissolve limescale
- Clean the sink
- Great for shower screens
- Kill mould and mildew
- Kills germs

- Great for cleaning your greenhouse
- Controls green algae

Just make sure that when you have sprayed it on to a sink or taps that you wipe it away with a damp cloth, or when it dries it can feel slightly sticky.

If you are on Instagram, Nancy is well worth following. Her books are really good too, and if you don't want to buy them, then the library has copies which you can read for free!

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.

May 2023 Shopping List

Urgent:

Shampoo
Toothpaste
Size 4, 5 & 6 Nappies
Washing Up Liquid
Coffee
Sugar

To Maintain Stocks:

Tinned Baked Beans
Tinned Soup
Tinned Spaghetti
Tinned Hot Meat (Curry, chilli, stew etc)
Tinned Snacks (Beans & Sausages etc)
Tinned Veg
Tinned Tomatoes
Tinned Fish

To Maintain Stocks (continued)

Tinned Rice Pudding
Tinned Fruit
Tinned Potatoes
Tinned Cold Meat
Instant Snack (eg Pot Noodle)
Jam
Cuppa Soup
Pasta Sauce
Rice
Pasta
Custard
Instant Mash
Biscuits
Chocolate
Long Life Juice
UHT Milk
Tea

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.braithreearea.foodbank.org.uk
info@braithreearea.foodbank.org.uk

Registered Charity in England & Wales (1148782)



Braintree Area Foodbank

A sad statistic! Braintree Area Foodbank has have fed 119% more people this January and February than in January and February last year. And we expect this to rise further, which is why we are asking for stock items so that we can maintain our food parcels.

* Please note: We ask for small packs as larger packs do not fit in our boxes making it difficult for our clients to carry home we are also unable (for hygiene reasons) to split large size or catering packs.

Plastic bags please



Do you have spare plastic bags? You don't want them being dumped in the ocean, do you? We at Foodbank need your plastic bags urgently. Please take them to your local centre (see <https://braintreearea.foodbank.org.uk/locations/>) or email us at info@braintreearea.foodbank.org.uk

Great Totham URC- Jean Moody - The work and play of May- article by Rev Peter Stevenson

The pagan festival of Beltane welcomes in the month of May and is positioned between the spring equinox and summer solstice. The Maypole is a symbol of fertility and dancing around the Maypole is the centrepiece of the festivities. Historians have suggested that maypole dancing originated in Germany and travelled to the British Isles courtesy of invading forces. By the Middle Ages, most villages had an annual maypole celebration. In rural areas, the maypole was typically erected on the village green. The ritual was also popular in ancient Rome.

In the British Isles, the maypole celebration usually took place the morning after Beltane, a celebration to welcome spring that included a big bonfire. When couples performed the maypole dance, they had usually come staggering in from the fields, clothes in disarray, and straw in their hair after a night of lovemaking. This led 17th-century Puritans to frown upon the use of the Maypole in celebration.

In England and the U.S., the Puritans managed to quash the maypole celebration for roughly two centuries. But by the late 19th century, the custom regained popularity as the British people took an interest in their country's rural traditions. This time around the poles appeared as part of church May Day celebrations, which included dancing but were more structured than the wild maypole dances of centuries past. The maypole dancing practiced today is likely connected to the dance's revival in the 1800s and not to the ancient version of the custom.¹

¹ May is also International Worker's Day and is now a public holiday in around 66 countries. In the United Kingdom and many other countries there are marches and rallies on International Workers' Day, to remember

the struggles for rights for working people in the past and that the fight to improve those conditions continues today.

In the late 1800s, workers in parts of the US began campaigning against harsh working conditions. Huge strikes took place across the city of Chicago in May 1886, where thousands of workers took to the streets to demand an 8-hour working day. Protests were suppressed by police in what became known as the Haymarket Affair. The 8-hour day was eventually adopted in the printing, construction and railway industries in the early 1900s and became law across the US in 1937.

Great Totham URC Preachers for May

- May 7th. Cyril Clarke
- May 14th. Pat Goodall
- May 21st. Sarah Wilson
- May 28th. A service conducted by our members

You will find us in Chapel Road Great Totham CM9 8DA
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

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
Magazine Editors		Jo and Bob Stibbards	bjstibbards@gmail.com
Sunday Welcome Team Leaders	Mrs Mr	Mary Goodwin David Goodwin	davidgoodwin2009@hotmail.co.uk



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

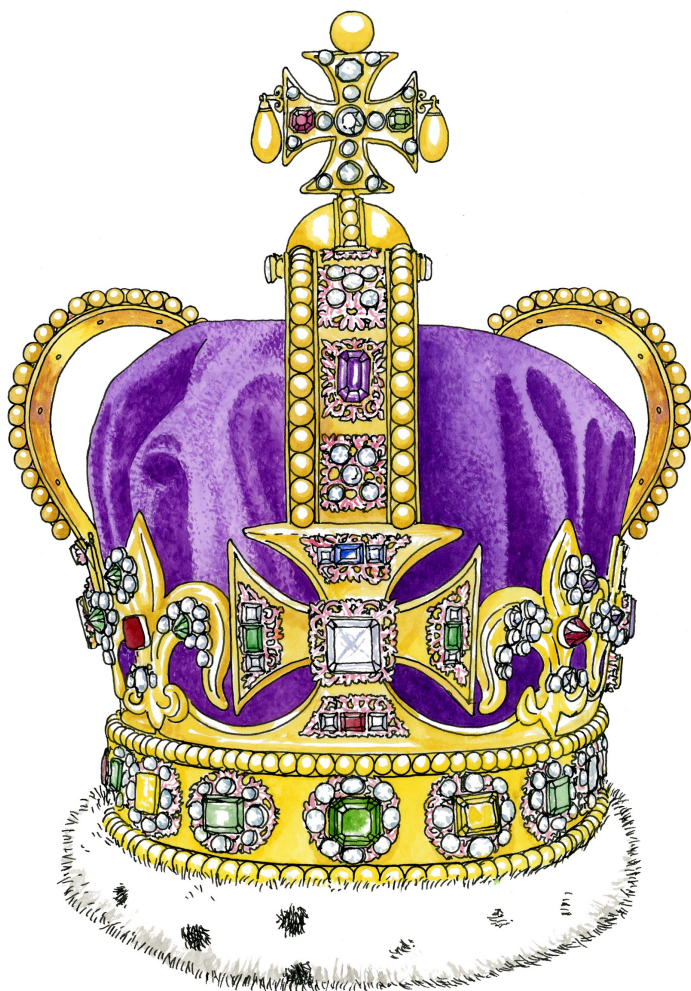
The Fat Old Dad Band

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



King Charles III
Coronation 6th May 2023
God Save the King