



WITHAM URC CHURCH MAGAZINE
July/August 2022

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

Pastoral Letter

Dear Friends,

It's hard to believe that we are half way through this year, which means of course that the days are already getting shorter 😞 but it also means that the summer weather and summer holidays are fast approaching 😊. I'm really looking forward to summer evenings sitting outside enjoying the light evenings and the sunset that follows.

Recently I was reading something about our role within the kingdom which suggested that there were three areas of God's interest for us to be involved in.

The first is helping those who don't know God get to know Him, the second is helping those who do know Him grow to know Him better and more intimately and the third is serving generously by helping those who are less fortunate than ourselves. Most of us are far more comfortable in one of these areas than the others so it is good to be reminded that there are many opportunities for us as individuals to support our fellowship's activity in all of these areas even if we cannot personally be active - we can provide encouragement and we can pray. As it says in Hebrews (10:24): *Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.*

Having said that, there is no reason why all of us shouldn't be engaged in each of these three areas as individuals too. Probably, for most of us, it's the first of these three that we find most difficult: helping those who don't know God to get to know him. But does it have to be so difficult? If we forget that our ultimate aim is to bring others to know Christ and simply enjoy Christ ourselves, really enjoy him, with a joy-filled, thankful heart, always feeling blessed, then, without even trying we will be radiating his love, grace, hope

and peace to others. As we reflect on the amazing things God has done for us so far, always bearing in mind that this is just the beginning because his unfailing love will pursue us every day of our lives, we cannot help but rejoice in him. Wouldn't it be fantastic if we so enjoyed Jesus, worshiping him and spending time with him as his friend, that we simply overflowed with contagious joy. A bit like Moses whose face became so radiant whenever he spoke 'face to face' with God, that he had to cover his face with a veil until he next went in to speak with him.

At that time, only Moses was allowed to approach God but now, because Jesus reconciled us to God by taking away all our sins when he died on the cross and conquering death and sin as rose from the dead three days later, we can approach God freely whenever we want; we can speak to him at any time and wherever we are. It's an amazing privilege so let's make full use of it!

I'm really excited and encouraged by what God is doing in the fellowship with lives being changed through encounters with him who is our living, loving God and I hope that you are too. So let's press on together, looking ahead to the second part of the year in anticipation of, and with thanksgiving for, what God is going to do in, among and through us.

I hope that you have a relaxing summer with a refreshing break and have the opportunity to enjoy time spent with family and/or friends - don't forget to include in that your heavenly Father who is always available and waiting to hear from you and lavish his love on you.

Ezra the priest wrote (Ezra 7:28): *I felt encouraged because the gracious hand of the LORD my God was on me.*

May you feel the gracious hand of the Lord with you and be hugely encouraged during the coming weeks.

Bless you. Lorna

Meanderings in Europe - Shirley Ratnage

At the end of May I finally got off to a holiday in France with my daughter Emma and family. The holiday had been booked for 2020 but Covid intervened. We set sail on calm waters over the channel and I just sat back and relaxed, leaving all the paperwork, route planning, food etc to my daughter. The 'regal' granny being pampered and served.

We stayed in a house in the village of Beauchamps sur Mer on the Normandy coast. This quaint village with one main street had all we needed – restaurants, food shops, bakery, souvenir shop, even a post office. Side streets off the main road led right onto the beach, tempting the grandchildren to swim, while grandma stayed safely on dry ground.

My contribution to the holiday was to go to buy bread and croissants for breakfast. I studied French at school and have tried to keep it up but soon found out that trying to work out a grammatically correct sentence which the shopkeeper failed to understand, led to a queue forming behind me. Pointing and saying the relevant word 'baguette' was quicker and understood. All I had to do then was hand over a sufficiently large denomination note to hopefully cover the cost of the purchases and wait for change.

Emma and family returned to England as work and school beckoned but I decided to take a train to Germany to visit long standing friends who live near Dusseldorf. Emma kindly deposited me on the platform of the right train going in the right direction in Caen and I was off to Paris and Germany. French railways were fine but masks were mandatory in Germany and at the first stop in Germany, police boarded the train to check we were complying with the rules. I spent a relaxing, very blessed weekend with our friends in Germany but got thrown off the train back to Dusseldorf as I did not have the right ticket for the train I had boarded. Nevertheless our God is greater than the German railway officials and I was able to get

the 'right' train to continue my journey without even changing platforms. Travelling alone raised numerous anxieties in me but I decided to leave everything to God and each day I saw his hand in my life – so many kind people helped with my luggage, offered seats, patiently explained things, directed me where I needed to go. 'Let go and let God' wins every time.

I then decided to go on to Switzerland to visit Michael and Deana King's daughter who is working in Lausanne. What a blessing she was to me and how the Lord is using her. She showed me around, made sure I had all I needed each day and I was able to share in the worship at her church on the Sunday morning. Emma teaches singing. She had a new young lady come to her that week wanting lessons. Emma invited her to church and we sat together. She explained to me that she had not been to church for 20 years but when the appeal was made at the end of the service she indicated she wanted to commit her life to God.

The church is large and vibrant but everyone is so friendly and looking out for those who might be on their own. Apart from the Sunday service they have groups for young people, study groups, new people get invited to a meal to enable them to get to know others and they are just starting a group for those addicted to pornography. When the Spirit is at work everything seems to gain momentum. It reminded me of the response to the disciples after they received the Holy Spirit and Peter preached to the crowd. Thousands joined the movement.

But God is not restricted to one way of working. The weekend I was in Lausanne the churches (but not Emma's one) staged an event La Nuit des Eglises in the square in the centre of town. Early evening there were clowns and magic for the young ones, bible stories, then music groups and worship. We only stayed a short while but the various denominations seemed to be involved and it was well organised. Visiting the church of St Francis earlier I had picked up some cards containing 'pithy' statements. One reads ' Dieu nous visite, mais la plupart du temps, nous sommes

absents.’ (God visits but most of the time we are absent) It reminds me of how important it is for us to stay daily in tune with God looking and listening for what he wants us to do to grow his kingdom.

Platinum Jubilee Sunday. Great Totham URC - Jean Moody

A lovely celebration, bringing people together in celebration of our dear Queen’s 70 years reign. Inspiring to know her faith in God has been her bedrock.’





July Fellowship Walk

This month I would like to do a walk around Marks Hall Gardens and Arboretum just north of Coggeshall on Saturday, 16th July when the walled garden should be superb. There is an entry fee of £8 for the gardens and a refreshment barn at the finish.

The walk can be as long or as short as you wanted. Meet in the car park just after 10.00am.

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

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN
ESSEX & EAST LONDON
BRADWELL
PILGRIMAGE
AND GATHERING

**SATURDAY
2ND JULY 2022
10:30-4PM**

PARKING IS AVAILABLE AT THE VILLAGE HALL, POSTCODE CM0 7LJ (NEAR ST THOMAS'S)
10:30 COMMISSIONING OF PILGRIMS AT ST THOMAS' BRADWELL FOLLOWED BY WALK TO THE
CHAPEL (A SHUTTLE BUS IS AVAILABLE FOR THOSE WHO MAY STRUGGLE WITH THE WALK)
12:00 MIDDAY WORSHIP
WITH BISHOP GOLI
THE SALVATION ARMY CHELMSFORD CORPS TO LEAD MUSIC

LUNCH — BRING A PICNIC

14:00 AFTERNOON ACTIVITIES

- EUCHARIST (ANGLICAN ORDER)
- SPRING DANCE COMPANY — THE GREEN PROJECT
- PRAYER GALLERY - ST FRANCIS COMMUNITY CHURCH
- REDUCING OUR CARBON FOOTPRINT — OTHONA COMMUNITY
- OTHERS TBC

COFFEE/TEA/CAKES
AVAILABLE IN THE
MARQUEE

15:15 AFTERNOON WORSHIP

LED BY RICHARD SAUNDERS, OTHONA COMMUNITY
DANCE BY SPRING DANCE COMPANY
ST FRANCIS COMMUNITY CHURCH TO LEAD MUSIC
16:00 CLOSE





Join us for a
Strawberry Afternoon Tea

Monday July 4th at 2.30pm

*Sandwiches,
scones with Tiptree jam & cream
Cakes & Strawberries*

Price: £5.00

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



House of Grace is a new supported housing initiative endorsed by Churches Together in Witham & District.



“Witham Makes Music!”

Saturday 2nd July 2022 at 7.30p.m.

An evening of music featuring
‘House of Grace Fundraising Choir’
and **‘St Nicolas Male Voices’**.

Talented soloists will perform favourites such as ‘Memory’, ‘On my own’ ‘I could have danced all night.’ and ‘All I want is a room somewhere’

St Nicolas Male Voices will raise the roof with the stirring Welsh Anthem ‘Morte Christe’

Other items by the Fundraising Choir will include the Jean Racine Canticle by Faure; Afrika Gloria by William Tamblyn, two lively Gospel songs and ‘Look to the Day’ by Rutter.

Admission: free Donations : yes please.



Prayers requested by Gear - Eve Murfitt

Final preparations for General Assembly - 8-11th July.

Summer Gathering a retreat at Westminster praying for those new to ministry that God will guide, strengthen and bless them in their ministry.

Please pray for church holiday clubs that people will be inspired to give their time, leaders filled with vision and plans will be filled with fun for the children and that Jesus would be proclaimed as Saviour.

Refreshing your Ministry Conference 10th-12th October 2023 at High Leighs.

50th Anniversary of URC in London 1st October. In these uncertain times in the world and in the church we need to pray that the Lord will reveal the next steps to us as a denomination. As we celebrate 50 years of the URC we give thanks to God for the many lives touched by the gospel and lives that have been transformed through faithful followers of Christ in local URCs.

As we move forward may we, as a denomination, be always ready to be led by the Holy Spirit, may our ears be opened to hear what God is saying to us at this time as a denomination and as local congregations.

(Rev. Richard Bradley member for Gear Committee)

Izaias and Ruth Clark Daniel de Assis update my Eve

I had hoped they would be able to visit us while in England on their way to Australia, 21st June-1st August returning to Brazil 8th August. It is many years since they came to us.

If there are any young people who would like to serve in Brazil for a year's work experience with young people in art, music, sports or in media, or in the brick factory selling bricks online, etc. the possibilities are endless. Please speak to Eve Murfitt.



It was bad enough your mobile ringing half-way through his sermon, without the ring-tone being the 'Christians Awake' tune!

With a Mission Open Day - 11th June - Jean Moody Great Totham URC

This was held at Whitton Baptist Church Ipswich. I went with a friend: We enjoyed the day very much and it was well attended.

The church as hosts gave us all a very warm welcome, with wonderful refreshments provided throughout the day. TWAM's achievements are too numerous to recount here , but if you are interested please look at their website and please pass on to TWAM any old tools, knitting machines, sewing machines, haberdashery items etc. They can be handed into Maldon Baptist Church. A workshop is held there on Thursday mornings or phone TWAM 01473 210220 and they will help arrange collection.

Photos: A delicious celebration cake .
Builder's kit/carpenter's kit/electrical kit





Who We Are

We are a Christian charity that collects unwanted usable tools, refurbishes them, sorts them into trade tool kits and sends them to the developing world for livelihood creation.

We send around 16 containers filled with a total of around 225 tonnes of tools every year. These tools range from sewing machines and knitting machines to carpentry tools and mechanics tools. Read more about the impact of tools on our blog.

[TWAM Blog](#)

Door Stewards Rota - David Goodwin

The rota for July to December 2022 is being prepared and volunteers of all ages are needed for the very important role of greeting people as they arrive for our Sunday morning service.

Your duties will also include handing out the service sheets (and bibles should they be requested), taking one of the Offertory bags (only if you want to) and collecting the bibles and unwanted service sheets after the service.

I hope enough volunteers come forward so you only have to undertake the role once in the period, although you are more than welcome to put your name down more than once if you wish to.

Please add your name to your chosen date/s on the rota in Church Suite if you can. If this isn't possible then please either email me with your chosen date/s or call me – details below.

Email: davidgoodwin2009@hotmail.co.uk

Tel: 01376 515203

Mob: 07932 198352

Bob's Blog

In our lane a Whatsapp group was started a while ago to share news and events ; it was very busy planning our Jubilee Street Party! For those who have not heard of Whatsapp it is a social media method of keeping in contact with groups of friends, families etc.

Recently a planning document was prepared for Great Totham which set out a clear criteria on which future development proposals for the village would be considered. Potentially without it, there could be a 'free for all' . There was a referendum with a simple decision to vote **Yes** or **No**. One of our neighbours shared on the Whatsapp group he had voted **No** by a postal ballot.

When a couple of our neighbours and I shared our thoughts on why we thought it would be better to vote Yes to accept the document he admitted that he had not read it before voting. In fairness the document was about 70 pages long and it was not easy to find on the internet. However in the light of our comments he read the document and shared on the Whatsapp group that he was so sorry that he made the wrong decision and was worried about the possible outcome if other people also voted No. However he did make very potent cocktails for our street party !

It made me think when we get things wrong it is not easy to find the grace to say sorry and to do it publicly

I found this experience very humbling and would I have done so?

The outcome of the referendum was that 89% of the village voted in favour of accepting the plan with only a 21% turnout and then people complain about not being consulted.....

Smile Lines

A couple took their five-year-old young daughter to church. During the service, the minister conducted the baptism of a tiny infant. The little girl watched in wonder as he held the baby, said solemn words, then poured water over its head, and then carefully wiped it dry. Finally, she turned to her father. “Daddy, why is he brainwashing that baby?”

The vicar had technical problems with the sound system one Sunday. Instead of starting the service as usual with ‘The Lord be with you’, he said: “There’s something wrong with the microphone.”

Not hearing this, the congregation responded: “And also with you.”

Are you camping this summer? Here are some helpful hints...

- ~ When using a public campground, a tuba placed outside your tent will keep the spaces on either side vacant.
- ~ You can duplicate the warmth of a down-filled bedroll by climbing into a plastic garbage bag filled with several geese.
- ~ Take this simple test to see if you qualify for solo camping: shine a torch into one ear. If the beam shines out the other ear, do not go into the woods alone.
- ~ A two-man pup tent does not include two men or a pup.
- ~ A potato baked in the coals for one hour makes an excellent side dish. A potato baked in the coals for three hours makes an excellent hockey puck.
- ~ The sight of a bald eagle has thrilled campers for generations. The sight of a bald man, however, does absolutely nothing for the eagle.

Whoever said "Out of sight, out of mind" never had a large spider disappear in the bedroom.

Recycle, repurpose, reuse, renew, review. - Julie Harris

I have been greatly encouraged in the last few months to read about and see new initiatives, on how to save our precious planet, and I'm excited.

I have never seen charity shops so busy, they are positively bustling with customers. Did you know, charity shops now have sections for prom wear, bridal wear and beach wear. I would say 90% of my entire wardrobe is from charity shops.

For those on a budget, you could pick up a lovely outfit, and bag and shoes for a fraction of the price.

Another initiative I have heard of is mum's groups setting up a network to swap maternity wear, baby wear, toys etc..... Brilliant.... perhaps young mums in the Church might like to set up something like this

I am also noticing more underwear, bags and clothing made from recycled fibres.... I am so excited this is happening.

Did you know that John Lewis have a scheme where you can join a kids clothing rental scheme for £18 a Month, you rent the clothes as long as you want them and simply return them and get the next size up.... how amazing is that... a brilliant concept.

There are also companies where you can rent adult outfits..... the opportunities are endless.

On a final note, I would like to say that looking back and going back needn't be a bad thing... I am referring to how previous generations repaired and used their innovative skills to make do.... I saw this on Facebook and absolutely loved it.....

Take control of your future...

Grow your own food
Preserve your own food
Trade and Barter
Cook from scratch
Save your own seed

Become self sufficient
Save all plastic boxes and use to store left overs
Buy in bulk and share with friends and family, as bulk buying is cheaper
Get creative.... get ideas..... share them...

Litter Picking



Are you interested in doing a small bit to make Witham a better place? The Eco Group are organising litter picks on three Monday afternoons:
27th June
11th July
25th July

Come and join us, we have gloves, litter pickers, tabards and sacks. Locations as yet not decided, if you know somewhere that needs clearing, do let us know; the only criterion is that it has to be safe.

(I know the A12 is dreadful but it's not safe to do.)

More information from the Eco Team, Muriel Heppinstall, Audrey Kennedy, Emmelia van der Walk, Ian Hardie, Julie Harris.

Minister	Minister	Lorna Bantock	571757
Children and Youth Pastor	Mrs	Viv Sollis	500958
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
Community Cafe Pastoral co-ordinator	Mrs	Eve Murfitt	
Prayer Chain Co-ordinator	Mrs	Rosemary Stinson	516602
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