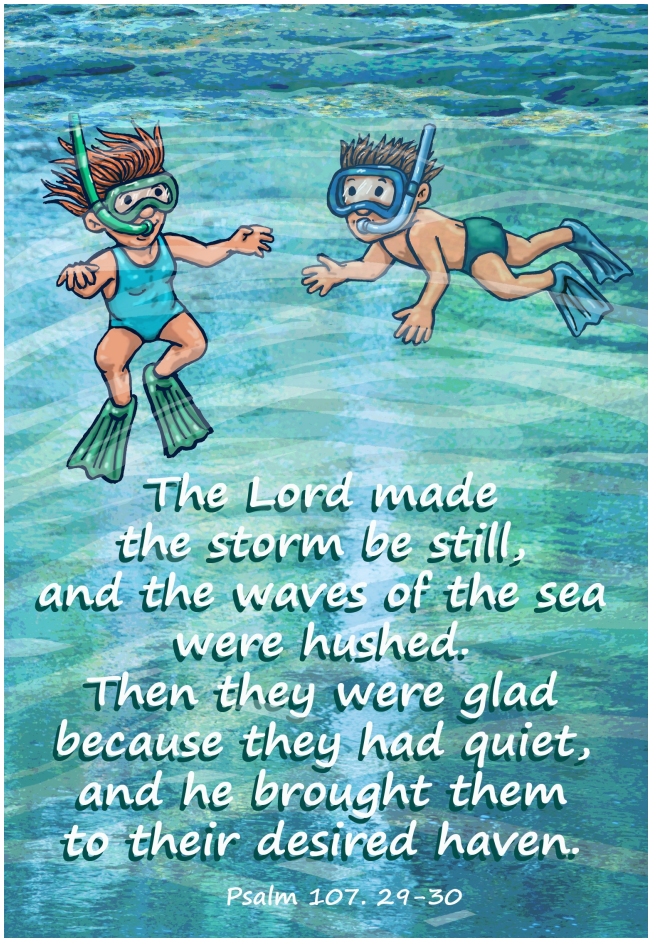


WITHAM URC CHURCH MAGAZINE
July/August 2024



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

Pastoral Letter

Dear Friends

The Parable of The Lifesaving station - by Dr. Theodore O. Wedel*

"On a dangerous seacoast where shipwrecks often occur, there was once a crude little life-saving station. The building was just a hut, and there was only one boat, but the few devoted members kept a constant watch over the sea, and with no thought for themselves went out day and night tirelessly searching for those who were lost. Some of those who were saved and various others in the surrounding area wanted to become associated with the station and gave of their time, money, and effort to support its work. New boats were bought and new crews trained. The little lifesaving station grew.

Some of the members of the lifesaving station were unhappy that the building was so crude and poorly equipped. They felt that a more comfortable place should be provided as the first refuge of those saved from the sea. They replaced the emergency cots with beds and put better furniture in the enlarged building.

Now the lifesaving station became a popular gathering place for its members, and they decorated it beautifully because they used it as a sort of club. Fewer members were now interested in going to sea on life-saving missions, so they hired lifeboat crews to do this work. The lifesaving motif still prevailed in the club's decorations, and there was a liturgical lifeboat in the room where the club's initiations were held. About this time a large ship wrecked off the coast, and the hired crews brought in boatloads of cold, wet, and half-drowned people. They were dirty and sick. The beautiful new club was in chaos. So the property committee immediately had a shower house built outside the club where victims of shipwrecks could be cleaned up before coming inside.

At the next meeting, there was a split among the club membership. Most of the members wanted to stop the club's lifesaving activities as being unpleasant and a hindrance to the normal social life of the club. Some members insisted upon life-saving as their primary purpose and pointed out that they were still called a life-saving station. But they were finally voted down and told that if they wanted to save the lives of all the various kinds of people who were shipwrecked in those waters, they could begin their own lifesaving station. So they did.

As the years went by, the new station experienced the same changes that had occurred in the old. It evolved into a club, and yet another lifesaving station was founded. History continued to repeat itself, and if you visit that seacoast today, you will find a number of exclusive clubs along that shore. Shipwrecks are frequent in those waters, but most of the people drown.

Thomas Brackett writes (<https://www.ecfvp.org/vestry-papers/article/272/parable-of-the-lifesaving-station>) the following :-

This parable is a remarkable appraisal of the tendency of faith communities to turn insular and artificial. The reasons I find it so appealing (as the Episcopal Church Centre's Officer for Church Planting and Ministry Redevelopment) follow: It was written by one of our own*, a past president of the House of Deputies to General Convention; it uses "parable" format to explore what is, as well as what might be; it skilfully critiques the tendency of religious communities to move toward a "Club" mentality, and it asks us to evaluate the "real time" contribution of faith communities by the actual difference they make in the lives of their surrounding community.

In the parable, there is a moment when what was a lifesaving station turns into a Club. From there forward, the primary reason for joining that club was the benefit of membership. Previously, the primary motivation was that of serving the souls who normally would have been lost to shipwreck on that rocky seacoast. The impact of that shift is that, eventually, those

rescued (now by independent contractors) were no longer welcomed into the clubhouse. They first had to be cleaned up and made respectable! Leaders across three denominations and two faiths (lay and ordained) tell me that this part of the parable sounds like a description of their home church.

What is your reaction to this parable? Where are you in this parable? I don't believe that we can have two first priorities, so what is your first priority?

*Dr. Theodore O. Wedel, a former Canon of the Washington National Cathedral in Washington, DC, wrote this parable. Ordained as an Episcopal priest in 1931, he served for a time as president of the Episcopal Church's House of Deputies. He penned this parable in 1953."

Shared with love in the saving grace of Jesus - Gavin

The Pledge - Jbay Recycling Project South Africa Denise and Philip Vinton.

This is one of the charities that has been supported through the Pledge.

My daughter, Clair, is one of the volunteers at the Jbay Recycling Project which opens every Monday during school time and encourages the children to collect recycling materials which are weighed and exchanged for Mulla. Mulla can be exchanged for essential food, toiletries, clothes, shoes and school uniform. With each visit the children are given free food treats which can vary from soup, hot dogs (their absolute favourite), sandwiches and usually milk and a piece of fruit depending on the kind donation of various organisations.



We have been asked to say a big THANK YOU from the Project. The donation made by Pledge just before Christmas made a very special day for about 250 children. The last open day of the year was their Christmas Day and every child was given a bag of food and gifts plus the usual carton of milk and one of their favourites a sausage roll with the addition of an iced

muffin complete with sprinklies A very special day for the children and the volunteers.

In 2023 the Project will have been open for 25 trading day, had over 5000 individual visits by 2,400 children and volunteers gave over 1,200 hours of their time on site which did not include any of the behind-the-scenes work. Recycling for 2023 totalled 890 tonnes. Without the Project this would be just laying around the local township and area of Pelsrous.



Each child meets with a single volunteer who accompanies them to make their purchases and provides them with one to one attention and a lot of love and kindness. Some come with a pre-written list and there are certainly some canny shoppers. The children have little but are often purchasing items for younger siblings. There is a really happy vibe as the children turn trash into treasure. In the annual report Tanya, who leads up the Project said “Only volunteers understand how our own outlook on life is improved by these simple actions”.

It is a small Project in a corner of South Africa but it is making a difference. The photos do not portray the whole picture but if you want to know more about the Project please speak to either of us. The Project regularly places short updates on Instagram under Jbay Recycling Project. I am really looking forward to our return and being part of the team once again.



Newland Street
Witham
CM81AE

Director of Outreach

24 Hours a week, £14,976 per annum.

We are seeking a visionary leader to join our core team as Director of Outreach. This new role is key to supporting our church to spread the love of Jesus within our community and to build on our successes.

Our building has been central to Witham's community for over 180 years but we are looking to the future. As needs change and the community evolves so must the church. We have a vibrant church which is extremely active, supporting the community across the week. Are you able to help us take this forward?

We are seeking someone with experience in managing volunteers and a community facility serving the needs of the church and the wider community. As someone with a commitment to share the love of Christ, are you able to lead and develop our team to deliver our vision and mission?

For further details please see our full recruitment pack; if you would like a confidential discussion about this opportunity, please contact one of our Outreach Elders either Ian Hunt on 07748915149 or Fenella Hardie 07962038612, or the details below.

Applications should be submitted in writing to Ian Hunt at the details below no later than the 31st August 2024, including an up-to-date CV and covering letter setting out your suitability for the role.

Witham United Reformed Church Newland Street
Witham
CM81AE
info@withamurc.org.uk



WURC
Witham United Reformed Church

Newland Street
Witham
CM81AE

Church Administrator

24 Hours a week, £12 per hour or £14,976 per annum.

We are seeking a Church Administrator to support the work and mission of our vibrant Church. Working with the Ministry team and the Director of Outreach, you will play a vital role in ensuring smooth operations and fostering a welcoming environment for all who engage with us.

The church is an active and growing community with a range of services and outreach. You will play a crucial part in ensuring the effective functioning of our church. With a commitment to our Vision and Mission Statement, you'll be instrumental in supporting various ministries and ensuring all church activities run seamlessly. Operating from the church office, you will be key to the coordination of the ministry team, staff and volunteers.

We are seeking someone with strong communication skills and experience of administration and understanding of the unique needs of God's home and the community it serves, who is interested in joining us to serve God and spread the love of Jesus.

Applications should be submitted in writing to Ian Hardie at the details below no later than the 14th July 2024, including an up to date CV and covering letter setting out your suitability for the role.

If you wish to discuss this role, please contact Ian Hardie.

Witham United Reformed Church
Newland Street
Witham
CM81AE
info@withamurc.org.uk

Courage - Tracey Eagling

As some of you will know, Lorna, Viv and myself were very blessed to be able to attend the Leadership Conference in May, which is arranged by Alpha.

During one of the first talks Nicky Gumble shares 7 encouraging and inspiring points from Hebrews 12, and one of these was on courage.

The following is taken from that section and are Nicky Gumble's words.

"You have courage in you.

The great Christian leader John Stott, said that pessimism is a particularly horrid sin, which is dishonouring to God and incompatible with faith in Christ.

When Simon Peter, the discouraged fisherman, at that moment had given up because he'd worked hard all night for no reward, Jesus said to him "put out into deep water and let down the nets for a catch." And then he says at the end, "from now on you'll catch men and women." Jesus encouraged him. In other words he put courage back into him. This is a picture of evangelisation. Just because you've struggled, don't become pessimistic, never give up. Faith and courage go hand in hand.

My former boss, now Bishop Sandy Millar exemplifies this. He took the risk to make radical changes at Holy Trinity Brompton, that have led to enormous growth, and transformation of thousands of lives. But it didn't come without opposition. It didn't come without courage.

I have kept a newspaper article from September 1990, 34 years ago. The headline was this **'Trendy' vicar sacks choir.** And the article says this:

A Chelsea vicar has caused a song and dance in his church by sacking the choir and introducing a pop band. Vicar Sandy Miller from Holy Trinity Brompton, put in a guitar based band to appeal to a younger generation of worshippers. Now, the congregation listen to a trendy worship group, comprising of a Roland synthesizer, electric guitars, electric organ and

violins, and that has upset regular members of the Chelsea church. One woman said 'it started last Sunday, he put in a pop group.' We've written to the Bishop of Kensington and the Bishop of London, but they've done nothing. But band member Rick Thorne, who is actually Rick Thorpe (now Bishop) said 'the new style of service was very popular with the congregation, the purpose behind changing the instruments was to broaden the appeal.'

We've had 3 times as many worshippers than normal. Rev Millar said 'times are changing, we wanted to have a service that would appeal to a wider audience and age group, and upon which we could build for the future.'



That's Courage. The thing that struck me about this article is that not only were the 2 men involved courageous but look how God blessed them for their obedience by making both men Bishops.

I wonder.....do we have that courage?!

TUESDAY PRAISE

AT WITHAM URC

JULY 2024

TIME: 12.30 - 1.00PM

EVERYBODY WELCOME

<u>Date</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
2nd July	Keith Moscrop
9th July	Revd Keith Ives
16th July	Revd Lorna Bantock
23rd July	Marina Bottali Price
30th July	Richard Wearmouth

Refreshments available afterwards



**QUIZ
NIGHT**

Friday
August 9th

Witham URC 7.30pm

Tickets £5.00

Bring your own drinks & nibbles (no alcohol)

*Teams of Six (but still come if you're on your own
& join another team)*

No need to book – just turn up!

Proceeds to the House of Grace



You asked for my hands provided by Denise and Philip Vinton

*You asked for my hands,
That you might use them for Your purpose.
I gave them for a moment then withdrew them,
For the work was hard.
You asked for my mouth,
To speak out against injustice.
I gave You a whisper, that I might not be accused.
You asked for my eyes, to see the pain of poverty.
I closed them for I did not want to see.
You asked for my life,
that You might work through me.
I gave a small part, that I might not get too involved.
Lord, forgive my calculated efforts to serve You,
Only when it is convenient for me to do so,
Only in those places where it is safe to do so,
And only with those who make it easy to do so.
Father, forgive me, renew me, send me out
As a usable instrument that I might take seriously
The meaning of Your Cross.*

Joe Seremane - South Africa



Join us for a
Strawberry Afternoon Tea
Monday July 8th at 2.30pm

*Sandwiches,
scones with Tiptree jam & cream
Strawberries*

Price: £6.00

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

There will be no Afternoon Tea in August
We restart on September 9th



Loving Large Is Our Life's Work - the Centre for Action and Contemplation blog 31st May 2024 provided by Keith and Gerry Moscrop

One of the scribes came to Jesus and asked, “Which is the first of all the commandments?” Jesus replied, “The first is this: ...‘You shall love the Lord with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’”
—Mark 12:28–31

In this homily, Father Richard considers Jesus’ response to the question, “Which is the first of all the commandments?”:

I don’t think any of us really know how to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. We might want to love like that, but how do we put all the parts of ourselves together and actually do it? It takes our whole life to figure out what Jesus’ words might even mean.

Then Jesus says, “You must love your neighbour as you love yourself” (Mark 12:31). Do any of us do that? Do we really love other people? Do we really give them as much attention as we give to ourselves? I don’t think so. We need to recognise, of course, that Jesus does imply that you must love yourself. If we hate ourselves, then how can we possibly know how to love our neighbour? We have to know proper and appropriate love of self, but we cannot stop there.

Imagine how different the world would be if we just obeyed that one commandment—to love our neighbour as we love ourselves. It would be the most mighty political, social upheaval imaginable. The world would be radically different if human beings really treated other people as they would like to be treated.

We can take this as a simple rule of thumb: What would I want from that person right now? What would be helpful for me to receive? Well, there's our commandment. There's our obligation to do to others!

It's so simple that we can see why we put all our attention on the Ten Commandments, or the hundreds of other regulations culture and religion place on us. It's much easier to worry about things that keep us "pure," so to speak, but are of little consequence.

I think the scribe is asking a very good question. After all is said and done, it comes down to loving God and loving our neighbour—and that implies loving ourselves. If I said this without quoting Jesus, I could be accused of oversimplifying or ignoring some of the important commandments, but thank God Jesus said it first. He taught that it's all about love, and in the end, that's all we're all going to be judged for. Did we love? Did we love life? Did we love ourselves? Did we love God and did we love our neighbour? Concentrating on that takes just about our whole lifetime and we won't have much time left over to worry about what other people are doing or not doing. Our job is to love God, love ourselves, and love our neighbours.

Essex and Herts Air Ambulance - Linda Barrow

Did you know that your local air ambulance service is a charity, relying on residents' donations?



You might think that the helicopters of Essex & Herts Air Ambulance (EHAAT) often seen flying overhead, are part of the NHS. But this free life-saving service provided 24/7 by helicopters and rapid response vehicles (RRVs) receives limited government funding and no National Lottery grants.

It is thanks to local people and businesses across Essex and Hertfordshire raising funds for EHAAT that the charity can provide its vital medical emergency service.

Last year, their critical care team treated just over 1,900 patients, operating from two airbases in Earls Colne and North Weald.

Each critical care team consists of a pre-hospital care doctor, a critical care paramedic plus a pilot and co-pilot who rush their clinical colleagues to the scene of medical emergencies within minutes, carrying life-saving equipment to deliver advanced clinical care. Usually, this equipment is only available in the hospital emergency department. Thanks to EHAAT and local people's generosity, patients have received life-saving transfusions from the blood reserves carried on board the helicopters and RRVs.

Many volunteers lend a helping hand to support the charity, all playing an important part. Jane Morton, EHAAT Volunteer Manager says their time is hugely valued by the charity. She explains: "The core of our operations extends beyond our fleet of helicopters and advanced medical interventions, it's the spirit of our supporters and volunteers that drive us forward."

“From helping in our charity shops to sorting treasures in our warehouses, picking up collection tins, giving engaging visitor centre tours and supporting events, every hour of volunteering makes a meaningful difference. Yet, it's more than the tasks at hand – it's about making connections and lasting friendships. Whether it's sharing experiences, learning new skills, or stepping in to support community events, our volunteers not only impact our operations as a charity but inspire others and create positive change across our local communities.”

If you're looking to give your time to help your local life-saving charity in the most meaningful way, please visit **ehaat.org/volunteer/** and discover how your contribution can support their mission. If you'd prefer to discuss how you can get involved or have any questions, EHAAT Volunteer Manager, Jane Morton, is just a call or an email away at 0345 2417 690 or jane.morton@ehaat.org.



Smalls for All - Julie Harris

Dear Church Family,

You may recall several years ago I asked if anyone could spare any smalls.

The charity, **Smalls for All** is a Charity, based in Scotland, who collect donated underwear for onwards distribution to Africa and the UK, for people who cannot afford to buy items for themselves.

Here is an extract from their Website;

"We collect only brand new pants and new or gently worn bras. We operate from the UK and support charitable organisations in Africa and the UK who are able to transport and distribute the underwear we collect to those in need."

Please note only gently worn bras are accepted, and only new pants for Men, Women and Children. If you have any of these items to spare I am sure they will be greatly appreciated. Once I have enough to post, I shall weigh them and let you know the weight. I will pay the postage charges.

Thank you so much in advance,

Every Blessing

Dr. Peter Stevenson - forwarded by Jean Moody Great Totham URC

One of the joys of this pastorate is the constant driving up and down the A1 between Stamford and Grantham. The Lord has protected me wonderfully and so far, I have not been held up in a traffic jam more than two or three times. I am not a very good driver as I get easily distracted, whether by the various road-kill animals that litter the carriageway or the actions of other drivers (particularly those that drive BMWs)! I tend to have the radio on but I get increasingly frustrated by the presenter's inane drivel that fills the airwaves. To avoid some of this, I listen to Classic FM and it has recently got me to reflect on what music means to me.

Music is definitely not my priority and I admit that I do not understand what value it holds. Music rarely 'moves me' and often annoys me, or rather the insincerity of the performance disappoints me. One day a month I prepare the orders of service for the churches and I pour over the hymnbooks to find the right words set to a familiar or easy tune in order to compliment the message of the day. Few hymns evoke memories but some have become favourites, especially if they combine theology and feeling.

I was giving thought to my funeral the other day and chose the following:

Entry music	To God be the Glory
Hymns	How great thou art
	One more step along the world I go
Exit music	Farewell by Rod Stewart from the album Bloody Red Roses

The reason for the choices is that the service is to be a celebration of life and recognition that the Lord has been a large part of that life. The first hymn was included in my Ordination service and used at each of my following Induction services. The second hymn contains the refrain, "from the old I travel to the new", reflecting my belief in the eternal life that awaits.

So why exit to a Rod Stewart song? Simple, he was the musician of my youth and the soundtrack to my pre-Christian life. His gravel voice, questionable lifestyle choices, and unusual hairstyle (did you know he achieved it by rubbing mayonnaise into his barnet?), may not be to everyone's taste. I recall making my first presentation in 1971/72 to a fourth form class (currently referred to as year 10, I think) on Rod Stewart's track Only a Hobo from his Gasoline Alley album. Perhaps I value music more than I realise?

What are your choices?

Great Totham URC Preachers for July and August

July 7th	Rev. Mark Ambrose
July 14th	Ernie Finch Communion
July 21st	Pat Goodall
July 28th	Farm Sunday Service

August 4th	Richard Maison
August 11th	Rev. Mark Ambrose. Communion.
August 18th	Rev. Graham Blyth
August 25th	Mike Harrison.

All are welcome to join our Sunday services beginning at 10:30 am
also our coffee mornings which are on
the second Saturday of each month.

You can find us in GreatTotham North, CM9 8DA

House of Grace Witham

Part time Housing Manager

The charity seeks to appoint a part-time housing manager to support the charity. The anticipated hours for this role will be **eight per week** and is based in **Witham**.

The role will be to provide administrative support to the Board of Trustees, the house project manager and the residents including but not limited to the below:

1. The Housing Manager will be responsible for leading the Housing Management Services provided to the residents at the House of Grace Witham
2. In addition to direct service delivery, the housing manager is responsible for the facilitation of housing management services. This includes managing and training the Housing Management Service team to enable an effective and efficient delivery of the overall housing project.
3. The Housing Manager is responsible for the following areas of the housing management service to the residents: Rent collection; Accounting; Arrears recovery; Responsive repairs; Major repairs; Cyclical repairs; Estate management; Occupancy management: Occupant participation.

The successful candidate will be:

1. prepared to have an enhanced DBS check
2. sympathetic to the aims of the charity to provide a home to the homeless
3. familiar with the Microsoft, emailing and electronic storing of files
4. prepared to be flexible in hours of work albeit respect will be given to all our staff's own commitments
5. prepared to provide at least two references, one of which must be from your current or previous employer and one from a character referee.

In return, the House of Grace Witham will offer:

1. an opportunity to work with and learn from our friendly team
2. competitive salary terms
3. flexible working where possible
4. five weeks per year pro-rata holidays (includes bank holidays)

To request an application form please email: em.vanderwalthouseofgrace@gmail.com

URC Daily Devotion 20th June

The apple blossom glows and promises the possibility of harvest long months ahead. The dainty flowers are edged with hints of pink. The annual rhythms of nature carry on in all their tiny and not so tiny splendours. Some things are, simply, good. God made them so...

Life goes on
and we are caught up in the blessing.
Life goes on
and creation carries the future.
Life goes on
and the trees become outrageous.
Life goes on
and the fields grow heavy.
Life goes on
and the waters flow richly.
Life goes on
and the air whistles through feathers.
Life goes on
and the soil yields its possibilities.
Life goes on
and the scents of the seasons are a calendar.
Life goes on
and bounty flows.
Life goes on
and beauty glows.
Life goes on
and seasons shimmer.
Life goes on
and lessons linger.
Life goes on
and wisdom beckons.
Life goes on
and draws us into the miracle of being wonderfully made and wonderfully connected to all that lives.

Minister	Minister	Lorna Bantock	571757
Children and Youth Pastor	Mrs	Viv Sollis	500958
Associate Children and Youth Pastor	Ms	Tracey Eagling	500958
Church Administrator		Post being advertised	
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
Welcome Team Leaders	Mr Mrs	David Goodwin Mary Goodwin	davidgoodwin2009@hotmail.co.uk
Magazine Editors		Jo and Bob Stibbards	bjstibbards@gmail.com