

CHURCH MAGAZINE SEPTEMBER 2024



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

Pastoral Letter

Embracing Change and Renewal

As we start to transition into autumn, we're reminded of the beauty in change. The leaves will begin to turn, and the air grows crisp, signalling the end of summer and the start of a new season. This time of year also marks the return of children to school, a period of fresh beginnings and renewed routines.

For me the pattern of school years has stayed; irrespective of the "normal" calendar, religious festivals or financial years. This pattern of starting in the Autumn, with the hopes and anticipation of the coming year; has remained core to my mental year. The optimism of the new season taking us from the long days of Summer to the comfort of winter.

In the midst of these changes, we often find opportunities for growth and reflection. Originally fed to us through our school attendance but, just as nature undergoes transformation, so do we in our spiritual journeys. Ecclesiastes 3:1 reminds us, "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens" It's a time to consider the ways we can deepen our faith and renew our commitment to one another and to God.

Let us take this season to gather as a community, supporting one another through life's transitions. Whether it's the excitement of new school experiences or the quieter moments of reflection as the days grow shorter, we are united in faith and purpose. After all is this not our time to learn, within our time to grow?

As a church we continually evolve, with new people and projects, changes in the way things happen. Whilst change can be unsettling, it also gives us the opportunity to appreciate the joy of discovery and experiences.

May we embrace the changes ahead with hope, trusting in God's steadfast love to guide us through each new chapter.

Blessings to you all this September.

Ian Hunt

The Pledge ACLT - by Sarah and Tunde Biyi

This month ACLT is featured which is one of the charities that as a church we have chosen to support through our Pledge giving.

ACLT info.....



<https://aclt.org/>

ACLT Charity: Registering stem cell, blood & organ donors to to save lives by giving the gift of life.

Who are ACLT?

The African Caribbean Leukaemia Trust (ACLT) is a leading Blood cancer/disorder charity, dedicated to diversifying the blood, stem cell and organ donor registers.

What do ACLT do?

Partnering with organisations such as NHS Blood and Transplant, Anthony Nolan and DKMS, they raise awareness and direct potential donors to sign up to their registers to donate blood, stem cells (bone marrow) and organs. There is a particular focus on raising awareness in the Black community

due to the severe shortage of donors of Black heritage in the UK on the stem cell (bone marrow), blood, and organ donor registers.

ACLT believes everyone (irrespective of background, colour or creed) should be able to find their perfect donor match and live a long and happy life.

Why do they do it?

Beverley De-Gale OBE and Orin Lewis OBE founded ACLT in 1996, 3 years after their then 6-year-old son, Daniel De-Gale, was diagnosed with acute leukaemia. In 1999 Daniel, became the first black individual in the UK to receive a stem cell transplant from an unrelated donor. As a direct result of the transplant and the regular blood transfusions he received, Daniel lived a happy life, finally free from blood cancer for several years. However Daniel sadly passed away 9 years post-transplant, aged 21. Both Beverley and Orin believe that Daniel's 6 year wait to find a matching donor resulted in the additional health complications that led to his multiple organ failure. Though he was leukaemia-free for a while, too much chemotherapy, radiotherapy, and other toxic drugs, pre- and post-transplant took their toll on his already weakened body.

“We believe that no one should die waiting to find their donor match”

Although a match was found for Daniel, the search went on too long. Why does it take so long to find a match for someone of Black heritage?



Just take a look at the numbers...

Do you know how many stem cell (bone marrow) transplant recipients are from minority backgrounds? 37%

There is clear demand for more donors! Unfortunately it's not only an issue with stem cell donors; there is also a shortage of blood and organ donors from ethnic backgrounds.

Do you know what percentage of current blood donors are from Black heritage? 2%

NHS Blood and Transplant need 12,000 new blood donors of Black heritage to meet the growing demand for ethnically matched blood for sickle cell warriors, who need regular blood transfusions to stay alive.

Black heritage blood donors are ten times more likely to have a RO blood subtype which is urgently needed to treat the 15,000 people in the UK with sickle cell disorder – which is prevalent within the Black African, Caribbean, or mixed backgrounds.

To get the best treatment, people need blood that is closely matched to their own and likely to be someone with the same ethnicity.

Do you know what percentage of Black people are on the organ donor waiting list? 11.4%

What has the charity done about it?

Through ACLT, over 150 matching stem cell donors have been found for patients around the world in urgent need and so lives are being saved. More than 150,000 individuals have signed up as potentially lifesaving stem cell donors, all registered through ACLT.

Plus, thousands of new blood donors and organ donors have also been registered through ACLT charity, saving many more lives. 28 years since its inception, ACLT is a 40+ award winning charity still committed to giving hope and gifting life.

A personal perspective...

As a family we have supported the ACLT charity since 2013 - below are some of the events we attended to raise both awareness of registering as a donor and well needed funds...

The Biyis volunteering to raise awareness and funds at a worship event in East London



At a concert held at the Royal Albert Hall, London...



At the Luton carnival - May Bank holiday



At an event in central London to launch the ACLT patient support network



Prayers for the ACLT charity

- Thanking God for the Charity, staff and volunteers for all they do to support patients, raise awareness to get people onto the blood, stem cell and organ register
- For Opportunities and platforms to continue to raise awareness
- That people will be receptive and respond to the cause / request and want to register
- Capacity / resources to continue to support patients both existing and new
- Funds to continue this important work.



Celtic Communion Service

September 15th at 6.30pm
led by Ian Hardie

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?

Eastern Synod at Witham - Saturday 12th October

Synod is the six-monthly meeting of representatives of all the URC churches in the Eastern Region and it travels between the larger churches in the region. This October it is Witham's regular turn and we need all the help we can get. We need help with setting up on the Friday evening, welcoming and stewarding during the day, help with refreshments, managing the car park and clearing up afterwards, etc , etc. Please put this date in your diaries and sign up on the church notice board.

From the National URC

To: All members and adherents of United Reformed Churches and our Local Ecumenical Partnerships

Dear Friends,

Firstly, thank you for all your contributions to your local church in 2023. This includes your financial contribution which plays an important part in the life of the whole church through the Ministries & Mission Fund.

As officers of the denomination, it's good for us to be rooted in a local URC (or LEP) congregation and to work out our faith in the local context, as well as across the entire United Reformed Church. On the other hand, it is good for you in local churches to know that those who serve you nationally understand the local church financial issues as well. And there have been some big issues over the last 12-18 months: inflation, a “cost of living crisis” for many, with energy costs rising unprecedented levels etc. Churches and ministers have had the same challenges as so many others.

The M&M Fund of the URC pays for ministers' stipends, training, Assembly costs and all the central support functions for ministry in the URC across three nations. The M&M Fund's main income is contributions from the churches with some top-up from synods, together with investment income and grants etc.

In 2023 the churches continued to support the M&M Fund to a wonderful level, but there also was significant and generous synod support. Overall, the giving to M&M Fund was slightly ahead of budget at £16.3 million. It was also only 2% down on 2022's result. However, we should note that these figures include the synods' extra contributions this year which amounted to £1.9 million, an increased amount compared to 2022.

The full M&M account for 2023 in summary:

Income – £18.2m – of which £16.3m was from churches and synods contributions

Expenditure – £19.3m

Deficit – £1.1m

2024 is not going to be an easy year either and we are again budgeting for a deficit. We have a commitment from synods to continue their support on top of church contributions and a plan for balancing the M&M budget over the next 5-7 years, including budget reductions of central costs of 3 to 5% p.a.

So, thank you to all who continued to contribute to your local church, thank you to all those churches who met their commitment for 2023 in full, and thank you to all those who, in adversity, continued to treat the M&M Fund as the first priority and paid what they could.

Stewardship of our resources, personally, as local churches and as a denomination is rarely easy, but it is one of the challenges we are called to in making our faith real. As the Spirit directs and as our means allow, can the churches once more continue to respond to the call of our gracious, loving and ever-generous God?

Again, thank you all!

If you have any questions or comments arising from this letter, please speak to your church treasurer who has been provided with more detailed information. If they are not able to help directly then they can get in touch with the finance team at Church House.

Yours in Christ,
Alan Yates (Treasurer)

Join us for
Afternoon Tea
Monday September 9th
at 2.30pm

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

Price: £7.00

Please let the office know
if you would like to come

01376 500958



“Let the little children come unto me, and do not hinder them, for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these”

Matthew 19;14

Howbridge School, staff representative:

“We strongly believe that the group/1-1 sessions have a **positive impact** on the early help of our students”

The bible recognises emotional wellbeing with the words of Jesus, “**Come to me all who are weary**, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11;28). Many of us have the privilege of being supported by having significant others around us to help drive us forward. But for some young people, that is not the case, with children feeling lost and left anxious as they try to make sense of life’s challenges. The Witham BB project is addressing these issues by delivering sessions that improve wellbeing, raise self-confidence and providing space for young people to develop resilience.

Since January, the project has focused on supporting students at Maltings, as well as continuing to work with primary school pupils. Schools welcome the support as they manage a growing increase in young people reporting anxiety and low self-esteem. It has been a year of transition for many of the schools, from having new staff teams to being accommodated in temporary buildings because of the RAAC concrete issue. The Witham BB project has **delivered stability and support** through all these challenges.

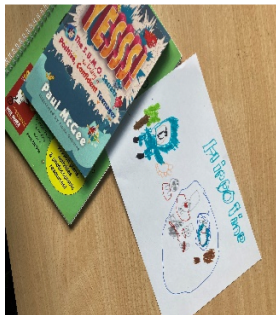
To aid transition, Schools have been given copies of Scripture Union’s “It’s your move” for all their year 6 pupils to support their move to secondary school. This great resource packed with advice, real life testimonies, helps children take their first daunting steps into secondary school.

Working with Churches Together, the “on your marks” holiday club has run during the first week of August which was advertised through Witham’s schools and local churches. By working together, the holiday club delivered stories of Jesus from Mark’s Gospel to children from Witham.

Moving forward...

- SUMO resilience sessions continuing at Maltings Academy.
- Sharing Scripture Union resources for collective worship.
- Primary pupils supported with one-to-one and group sessions.

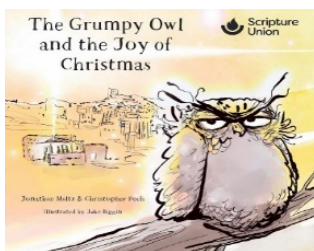




Staff SUMO wellbeing sessions and responding to the needs of the school's community, as outlined by Head teachers.

Continuing to strengthen positive relationships with Head teachers and Senior Leadership Teams. Working with Witham's Churches Together.

New academic year....



To continue to show God's love through relationships, conversations, resources and practical, relevant support.

Artless Theatre Production "Grumpy Owl" at Christmas and other productions in 2025.

To provide wellbeing by serving, listening, responding to needs of individuals.

Points for prayer:

Thanks for a warm welcome from schools.

For continued opportunities to share the Gospel through collective worship.

For churches supporting the project and building strong connections with families.

For funding of the project, so that it may continue and develop further activities/workshops/training.

For staff and students as they begin the next academic year.

TUESDAY PRAISE

SEPTEMBER 2024
AT WURC

12.30 - 1.00PM

TUESDAY

3rd Sept

Speaker

Keith Moscrop

10th Sept

Pastor Phil Noel

17th Sept

Revd Howard Schnaar

24th Sept

Revd Lorna Bantock

Refreshments available afterwards

Prayers from Interdenominational Church Service Abroad provided by Dot Banks

The Seafarer's Version of the 23rd Psalm

The Lord is my pilot, I shall not drift.

He guides me across the dark waters.

He steers me in channels. He keeps my log.

He pilots me by the star of holiness for His name's sake.

Yea, though I sail in 'mid the dangers and tempests of life I shall dread no danger for He is near me.

His love and care shelter me.

He prepares a harbour for me in the homeland of eternity.

He anoints the waves with oil so my ship rides calmly.

Surely sunlight and starlight shall favour me on my voyages and I will rest in the port of our Lord forever.

May the Lord Jesus take our minds and think through them

Take our hands and bless through them

Take our mouths speak through them

Take our spirits pray and through them

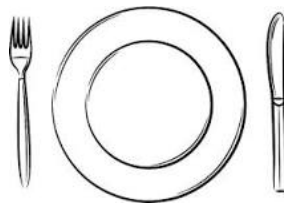
And above all may the Lord Jesus take our hearts and love through them

So that it is He who lives and works in us

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Meals for the Alpha course commencing 18th September

Could you help please by providing a simple one course meal for the Alpha course ?



The course commences on **18th September** and runs for 13 weeks; the meal provides an important focal point for the start of every session.

There is a signing up sheet on the church notice board in the community cafe.

Please speak to Tracey Eagling or Bob Stibbards if you have any queries

Thank you.



"Finally, we're still waiting for someone from last week's Parent & Toddler Group to come and claim this lost property..."

Centre Bible Study Group Outing - Muriel Heppinstall

At the end of August on a lovely sunny day 13 group members and Ollie ,our driver, set off in the church minibus on our annual outing. This year we visited Lindsell and Dunmow churches. Lindsell is a tiny church accessed through a farmyard! Parts of it are Norman; the church was mentioned in the Domesday book. One unusual feature is the remains of an Anchorite cell. This was where someone, usually a woman but not always, wanted to dedicate the whole of their life to prayer. They were permanently walled up in a small room attached to the church with a 'squint' to see the high altar and a hatch for their paid servant to pass food etc in to keep them alive. St Julian of Norwich was perhaps the most famous of these Anchorites. Services are still held there every week and the church is well cared for.

Dunmow church was altogether on a grander scale, again with interesting architecture, particularly the stained glass. The outing finished with an excellent lunch in the appropriate Angel and Harp pub right by the church.



Rose Prior's 95th Birthday - Jean Moody, Great Totham

Rose is accompanied here by her very dear friends -Rev Dr Peter Stevenson, Stamford URC and his lovely wife Dawn. Peter writes a monthly letter for Great Totham URC which we include in this magazine.





Jean Moody - Great Totham URC

It seems but a short time since summer began ! I see that I could note in our church September diary - “ 22nd September- autumn equinox.

Great Totham URC. Preachers in September.

Sunday 1 st.	Rev. David Skipp.
Sunday. 8th.	Rev. Mark Ambrose.
Sunday 15 th.	Gil Heathcote. Communion.
Sunday. 22nd.	Sarah Wilson
Sunday. 29th.	Service at Witham URC.

All are welcome to our Services here at Great Totham .

Services begin at 10:30 am

followed by tea/coffee and time t

Our next coffee morning is on

Saturday 14th of September

10 am until 11:30 am. to which you are also very welcome.

You can find us in

Chapel Road, Great Totham North. CM9 8DA.

From Rev Dr Peter Stevenson, August
- Jean Moody, Great /Totham URC

There was an opportunity during August to concentrate this article on matters specific to Stamford as the copy is not included in the ChristChurch magazine. Living here for the past five years has opened my eyes to the contrasts that exist in society generally, but here specifically. It is probably one of the few places one can see a Maserati, followed by a Bentley, followed by a Porsche. I recall the first lunch we ordered at a local garden centre only to gulp at the cost of two Jacket Potatoes with a filling and a couple of cups of coffee.

However, Stamford Welland Academy attracts Pupil Premium Funding (PP) for around half of its pupils. This funding from the Government is assessed on the basis of those receiving free school lunches; looked after children; young carers and children of Armed Forces personnel. George's Hub started in January 2022 and extends the work of Second Helpings, which claims to have fed in the region of 75,000 people; collected and distributed 235,000kg of food; and saved 200kg of CO₂ each year, since it started in 2014. Stamford and Oundle Foodbank continues to provide emergency food parcels to help in times of crisis and I enjoy frequent Friday visits to support and encourage the team there.

With these two extremes illustrated above, it is difficult to truly understand Stamford as either a rich or a poor town. The reality is that it embraces both with a degree of acceptance and tolerance. At the recent General Election, I was left to reflect that no party satisfied my own wish for a conservative socialism or socialist conservatism. I favour a free-market economy that rewards effort and enterprise and yet I want to see greater opportunity, social mobility and fairness in society.

As a Christian Minister, I look towards Jesus for the answer and often reflect on his messages on what the Kingdom of God looks like. He

operated as a counter-cultural reflector of the society he saw and the context in which he lived. He called out abusive practices and directed people towards a peaceful way of living. His reward was to be nailed to a cross! If I am to be true to my calling, perhaps I should be bolder in delivering a prophetic message of destruction to any society that fails to close the gap between rich and poor, haves and have nots, urging us all to work towards a more egalitarian basis from which to live together.

Blessings

From Rev Dr Peter Stevenson, September
- Jean Moody, Great Totham URC

My very good friend BB Cobbinah died recently and I am greatly saddened by her death, but very pleased that she is no longer in pain. I know that she has been welcomed into the eternal kingdom where there is no more pain and suffering, no more tears, where the things of this world have gone and the joy of heaven has been welcomed. I can only know this by faith and can only know that this was BB's destination because of the way she lived her life in this world.

BB and Paul came to the UK from Ghana to seek a better life for their family. They lived in Thamesmead before moving to the Elephant and Castle. I met BB in 2009 when I was inducted into the special category minister based at Crossway; Paul had died early and I did not get to meet him. BB's first question to me was whether I believed in the healing ministry. I was a little taken aback by the directness of her questioning but affirmed my belief that God continues to heal people in the name of Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit. That conversation started a close and fruitful ministry with me supporting BB as she developed.

She received a message that resulted in the production of a healing cream and the proceeds enabled her to build a church in a rural village between Accra and Kumasi. I was privileged to witness and can bear testimony to some remarkable results when, through prayer and the application of the cream, healing resulted. BB also went on to train as a Synod Recognised lay preacher, although there were struggles with the essays at times. She dedicated herself to prayer and was always available to people who would call her requesting help and advice.

I recently finished a service with the question, "Is being a Christian worth it?" One response came immediately – "Yes definitely, I shall either enjoy I hope to achieve both!" BB certainly did the latter and I am certain she is. the eternal kingdom to come or benefit from living a good life in this world.

Blessings

Walking is a great way to exercise (a reminder!).

You may be young or old, working endless hours, or retired. But there is one exercise you can still undertake almost anywhere, for however long or short a time: walking. According to health specialists, the simple act of walking “ticks so many boxes – improving our brain, mental and musculoskeletal fitness, as well as our physical fitness.”

Here are some reasons why:

Walking raises your heart rate and makes you breathe faster.

It gives you the benefit of a moderate aerobic workout – without the stress on your joints. As for your blood sugar levels, consider this: after a meal your blood sugar level rises and your pancreas releases insulin to bring it down. But even a five-minute walk can help by blunting the spike in blood sugar. Try and keep your pace brisk – aim for 100 to 130 steps a minute.

Walking improves your bone density

Walking briskly engages the muscles along the back side of your body – the hamstrings and calves. They in turn put a bit of pull on your bones, which stimulates your bones to produce osteoblasts, which improves your bone density and reduces your risk of osteoporosis.

Walking improves your mood

It stimulates your parasympathetic nervous system (nerves that relax the body during stress) and stimulates your amygdala (that part of you which controls your emotions). And if you can walk near water (rivers, coast, in the rain) you get exposed to negative ions in the air. These electrically charged molecules are excellent for your mental health.

Walking helps your brain

You will sleep better, and your brain will be in better shape for memory and cognition. Walking also stimulates creative thinking – studies have found walking is a great time for problem-solving.

Walking helps your body shape

An instant way to look younger is to stand tall. So walk with your head up, shoulders back, and lengthen your back, to stand up straighter. And with firmer muscles, your overall body shape will improve, which in turn will boost your confidence!

Minister	Minister	Lorna Bantock	571757
Children and Youth Pastor	Mrs	Viv Sollis	500958
Associate Children and Youth Pastor	Ms	Tracey Eagling	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	
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
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Magazine Editors		Jo and Bob Stibbards	bjstibbards@gmail.com