



WITHAM URC CHURCH MAGAZINE

December 2023 /January 2024

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

Pastoral Letter

Dear Friends,

The good news of Christmas is that even when the world or our circumstances change, the message of Christmas is timeless. Because Christmas is about the birth of God's son – Jesus. It is about how He came to save us and give us love, hope, and joy.

Recently in our house group we have been studying the letters of Paul. In Paul's letter to the Corinthian Church, he writes in chapter 13:13 'And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love'. Paul wrote that love endures forever. Love is the greatest of all human qualities and is the attribute of God himself. Love involves unselfish service to others.

In John chapter 13:34 it reads 'I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you.... By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another'. To love others was not a new commandment (Leviticus 19:18) but to love others as much as Christ loved others was radical. Now we are to love others base on Jesus' sacrificial love for us. Such love will not only bring unbelievers to Christ, but it will also keep believers strong and united in a world hostile to God. Jesus was a living example of God's love, as we are to be living examples of Jesus' love.

Love is an attitude that reveals itself in action by helping when it's not convenient, by giving when it hurts, by devoting enough energy to other's welfare rather than our own, by absorbing hurts from others without complaining or fighting back. This kind of love is hard to do and that is why people notice when you do it and know that you are empowered by God's Holy Spirit.

Now since love isn't what you say or but what you do – today go out and find practical ways to express God's love to those you meet. They will feel good, and you will too. You may have a neighbour who is lonely or a friend

or relative in need or someone that you meet in your daily walk whose life you could uplift or turn around. Christmas is for giving.

Wishing you every blessing this Christmas time and as we go into the New Year.

Sarah Wellings

(Pastoral Elder)

Pledge Committee - Deborah Robinson

Each year we give 10% of the churches offering income and allocate this to charities through the Pledge Committee. Back in September the church meeting agreed to support 9 charities through donations from our Pledge. As a committee we would like the church to not just give money but to gain an understanding of each of the 9 charities we chose to support, and to offer our prayer support to them as well. Over the coming months we will focus on each charity so we can all learn more about them.

PAPYRUS – Prevention of Young Suicide

During January we will be looking at PAPYRUS, a charity working to prevent young suicide, promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in young people. It is an awful fact that suicide is the biggest killer of people aged 35 and under in the UK. PAPYRUS was founded in 1997 by a group of bereaved parents who had each lost children to suicide. They knew that those who have lived experience of suicide have a valuable and unique contribution to make to widen the conversation around the subject and to help prevent others suffering in the same way. Most of the current Trustees have also experienced personal loss through suicide.



PAPYRUS run a free, confidential 24 helpline that has phone, text, webchat and email service. They also deliver suicide prevention education and training packages to thousands of people each year, going into workplaces, schools, universities and communities. The trained advisers on the helpline are also there to help and guide those who are supporting a young person during difficult times.

One of PAPYRUS's current projects is called 'Save the class'. Over 200 teenagers are lost to suicide every year in the UK. One in ten teachers said on average a student shares suicidal thoughts with them once a term or

more, and yet teachers do not feel equipped to support these students. PAPHYRUS has developed a guide to suicide prevention, intervention and postvention in schools and colleges for teachers and wider staff. This aims to equip school and college staff with the skills and knowledge to support a student who may be having suicidal thoughts.

Suicide is everyone's business, far too many of us have been affected or know someone who has been affected by suicide. Do make use of PAPHYRUS if you need to or signpost a person to them for help. I'm sure that your generous donation through the Pledge Committee will save lives of young people and help the people who love them.

PAPHYRUS Hopeline 24

Tel: 0800 068 41 41

Text: 07860 039967

Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org

Look at the PAPHYRUS website for further details:

www.papyrus-uk.org

Follow this link for downloadable resources such as; coping with exams, bereavement, suicide safety plan and worried for your child.

www.papyrus-uk.org/help-and-advice-resources/

Saturday Morning Prayer Meeting - Shirley Ratnage

We meet in Room 1 in the Centre from 10am until 11am and all are welcome to join us.

Our purpose is to pray for the outreach work of the church. We start with a time of quiet, followed by praises to God for all the blessings He has/does/will bestow upon us. Following a short bible reading, we spend time listening to God and then make our requests known to Him. We finish with the Lord's prayer/blessing.

We average 8 people each week and there is no commitment to come every Saturday. Just join us as and when you can and when you feel God calling you to pray with other brothers/sisters.

There is no pressure to pray out loud. Some do, others don't but at the end of the meeting, we all feel blessed by the time we have spent together with God.

Throughout the New Testament we are reminded to 'pray always'. Praying together brings additional strength, understanding, fellowship, unity.

Please join us when you are able.

God bless

Alternative gifts – Rwanda Style - Shirley Ratnage

Christian Hope International, a small charity based in Harold Wood has worked in Rwanda since the genocide and have in the past received grants from our Pledge Committee. They sponsor 550 children, paying school fees and health insurance. All of their work is through the Anglican church in the country and in addition to the sponsorship, they fund projects such as vocational training, supporting community nurses, prison work, repairs to schools/churches, start up loans etc.



In their latest magazine we read that a rural church which had been renovated to meet government building standards, gave their pastor a live cockerel to celebrate the occasion, with a note saying: 'this is to wake you up so early to come to deal with our issues, when you wake early everything is done on time for the good of the people being served.' At least he won't have to worry about the battery running out.

Rwanda is in the news at present for the wrong reasons. I visited with the charity 20 years ago and the country was in a dire state. I will be visiting again in January 2024 specifically to meet the children I sponsor. I am expecting to see great changes in the country, especially as I will only be staying in the capital Kigali, however the needs of the poorer people remain.

Some children don't get an education because their parents can't afford the school fees. CHI run a scheme where you can donate money (I think £5 per term) to ensure students get a meal at lunchtime (maybe their only meal of the day) As Jesus said 'the poor, you will always have with you.' In any society, progress often leaves some communities behind. It is good to have the opportunity to help some of these people, who are equally precious to God.

I look forward to my visit and updating you on the situation on my return.

Welcome Team Rota - David Goodwin, Welcome Team Leader

The rota for January to June 2024 is being prepared and volunteers of all ages are needed for this very important role of greeting people as they arrive for our Sunday morning service. **Please note that serving and former Elders have their own rota.**

You should arrive by 10:00 and your duties will also include handing out the service sheets (and bibles & song books should they be requested), taking one of the Offertory bags (only if you want to) and collecting the bibles, song books, unwanted service sheets/newsletters and empty drinking beakers 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 text/call me – details below.

Email: davidgoodwin2009@hotmail.co.uk

Tel: 01376 515203

Mob: 07932 198352

Thank you

Charities supported by the Christmas Plate - Bob Stibbards

The Christmas plate is to be divided equally between CHES Homeless and Mid and North East Essex Mind.

CHES Homeless

CHES was originally set up by Churches Together in Chelmsford and many of the churches in Chelmsford and the surrounding area have generously supported CHES ever since. In fact, many of our trustees and volunteers have been drawn from their congregations. They have two chaplains that regularly visit the night shelter who offer prayers and support to residents if they wish.



Being able to offer shelter can have a long-lasting effect on someone. CHES has a number of properties that offer shelter to those who have been homeless. The first stop is the Shelter (this property is staffed with support workers), from there it's a move to the Annex and from there to one of their move on properties.

In addition to the Shelter and move-on accommodation across Essex, CHES provides outreach services to rough sleepers in 8 local authorities – Chelmsford, Maldon, Braintree, Rochford, Epping, Brentwood, Castle Point and Uttlesford. Once a rough sleeper is referred the team will visit the person concerned to assess their immediate needs, providing emergency items as required. They also have rooms available at another property for emergency cases, and may be able to provide temporary accommodation (72 hours), a hot shower and meal etc, after an initial assessment.

Website: www.cheshomeless.org

Tel: 01245 281104

Mid and North East Essex Mind.

Are a local mental health charity who believe that no one should have to face a mental health problem alone. Below is a summary of some of the services offered.



Counselling

Counselling is a talking therapy which involves talking to a trained professional about your thoughts, feelings and behaviour. They have a free counselling service as well as a private counselling service, both are for people aged 18 and over.

Futures in Mind

If you are looking for support with recovery from mental health problems and/or substance and alcohol misuse? Futures in Mind is a service designed for people across Essex to help.

Youthful Wellbeing Service

Working in partnership with local Minds, this service offers support to young adults aged 18-25 who are experiencing mental health problems.

Practical Support

If you are an adult living with a mild to moderate mental health problem and need information, advice and practical support to get help from other local services and organisations, our Support Time and Recovery Service (STaRS) is here to help.

Personality Disorder Support Service

If you are an adult living with a Personality Disorder in Mid Essex, our practical support service is here to help.

Website: www.mnessexmind.or

Tel: 01206 764600



Afternoon Tea
Monday December 4th at 2.30pm
Sandwiches
Scones with Tiptree jam & cream
Cakes
All for £6.00
Please let the office know if you would like to come
01376 500958

Merry Christmas Poem - Peter Howard

Merry Christmas.
The Christmas rush was on again
And the poor to the shelter did go.
For once again this year they would star
In the annual let's give 'em a mattress show.
Out of the parks and the railway arches
The forgotten army did hurry.
Runaway daughters, long lost sons
And Fred a chartered accountant from Surrey.
Easing the country's conscience, laying on a special treat
Putting things right for a couple of days
The high wash the lowly's feet
A chest of compassion sealed tight for a year
Is opened and its contents let fly
To free they eye and soften the heart
And for a time we hear the poor cry.
The season of hope, a time of goodwill
Of mountains of mince pies and drinking our fill.
But it's over and done before we know
And self once again takes its hold.
While the forgotten army go back to the streets
With Christmas paper to keep out the cold
Seen as a burden, seen as weak
A beggar, a conman, a waster.
The once family man who still mourns his wife
Is so broken would we like a taster.
The raw wind and rain know not what they do
To them every man is a stranger.
But we of the flesh are petitioned to care
To give shelter even if only a manger.

Gear Autumn Prayer letter provided by Eve Murfitt



www.gear.org.uk

AUTUMN PRAYER LETTER 2023

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Our Committee recently met at High Leigh, ahead of the Refreshing Your Ministry conference. In place of the usual prayer letter, Ashley has produced a prayer video which can be found on the GEAR Facebook page:

(https://www.facebook.com/groups/2667695730/permalink/10160713961690731/?mibex_id=OMANDW)

The following is a transcript of his video

"Hi

As you know we've been here at High Leigh with the Gear Committee and Refreshing Your Ministry conference and I just want to do a prayer that talks about, really, what we felt we had on our heart, that God had laid on our heart. There's all sorts of stuff from laying things down and being obedient and allowing God to speak into our lives and that.

But most of all, what we thought of was this whole idea of reclaiming the word evangelism and not just reclaiming the word, but doing it.

How do we do that in our churches?

How do we do that in our Synods?

How do we actually encourage the church, the wider church, our national church to take on board?

What evangelism truly is rather than just talking about the word?

And to just do it.

So let's just pray right now,

Father God, we thank you that we are encouraged by you to go into all the world and give the good news and we pray right now that we might be a church that understands that this is our main thing. You have called us going to all the world to preach the gospel and to give the good news to those around us.

Father, as a church, helpless, as United Reformed Church, help us to understand that evangelism isn't something we're frightened of, that comes from somewhere else. Evangelism is a gift from you - that we need to be able to speak of our faith, to talk about our Jesus, and to encourage those around us to do the same.

So, Father, we pray for our denomination, we pray for us as a GEAR committee, that we might be able to encourage and build up and to be supportive in all these discussions. But more than discussions, to encourage us to just do it, to enable us to be your people in obedience to you, working with the knowledge of what you've given us, that we are empowered to do it. And that we are expecting to be able to see things happen, to be able to see people come to know you, Father.

Bless us, we pray, that you do this in Jesus name.

Amen."

Ashley Evans (Rev'd)

Chairman:	Rev Matt Stone	15 Gough Close, Rothham, Yorks. YO5 2E9	01752 572005	chairman@gear.org.uk
Secretary:	Rev Sheila Coop	219 Chamber Road, Oldham, Lancs. OL8 4DJ	0161 626 2864	secretary@gear.org.uk
Treasurer:	Rev Simon Copley	73 New Road, Farnley, S. Yorkshire, YO1 1EY	01752 514471	treasurer@gear.org.uk

Loving Our Ministers Well

An article by Eric September provided by Sarah Biyi

Leaders are a necessary part of our world. We need people who carry the burden of leadership to help move culture forward, or be a representative for those who have none.

The Church also has leaders, often called pastors. They are leaders tasked with caring for, teaching, and leading the people of God. Pastors have dedicated their life to serve God by serving others.

Pastors and shepherds in the Church do not lead the same way as leaders in the world. Pastors are supposed to lead like Jesus did, through humility, gentleness, and service. Their primary task is to lead people toward Jesus.

Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 that we should make it a priority to encourage and thank our pastors and spiritual leaders. We should go out of our way to encourage and honour them.

This doesn't mean that we put our pastor on a pedestal above everyone else. Pastors are people, too. But, as pastors seek to serve God by serving the Church, we should do everything we can to honour them as Paul says. In a time where pastors carry a lot of emotional burden, while also bearing a lot of societal pressure, we as the Church should do what we can to love our spiritual leaders well.

Take time to think about your own pastors, shepherds, or spiritual leaders. Think about the impact they've had on your own life and journey with Jesus.

'Likenesses' Rod Gayton

In a recent edition of the magazine there was an article by Gerry Moscrop on Peter Flint's retirement service. I shared this with Dot Reed, a member of St Nicholas, who knew Peter and his wife Judith in the 1980's and responded by providing 2 photographs on the occasion when they left Witham in 1986. She made them 'likenesses' which they loved and are shown below.



How the CARE Leadership Programme shaped a generation of Christian Leaders provided by Eve Murfitt



Philippa Taylor

Director of the Institute for Faith and Culture

Summarising the impact of 30 years of the unique CARE Leadership Programme in just a short booklet is an almost impossible task! The Programme has been one of CARE's most exciting and long-lasting initiatives and we are delighted to be able to share some of the stories from it with you.

In 1993, Lyndon Bowring and Charlie Colchester had the original vision to set up a politically-focused Leadership Programme, prompted by conversations with various Parliamentarians. They recognised the importance of inspiring and developing young Christian leaders who could be an influence for good in the long-term, both in Parliament and in the wider public square.

For the last 30 years CARE has provided the first step into public life for nearly 400 young people, giving them a year that combines a political placement with an intensive study and leadership training programme. We have run around 1,500 study days and over 100 study weekends. We have arranged placements with politicians from more than 10 different political parties, and with many charities

and NGOs. We have had yearly cohort sizes ranging from just 2 grads to 24 grads. And we have probably provided them with at least 35,000 cups of coffee!

The stories written here are from just a sample of those young people. There are many more such stories we could tell of alumni working in Parliament, the Civil Service, the media, the charity sector and the church, who are all testament to the realisation of that original vision.

Today, we have 15 young people on the Programme and they are in 19 different political placements. We are so excited to see what they too will go on to accomplish in the future.

Looking forward, we ask that you pray for the CARE Leadership Programme to continue to enact its original vision of growing Christian leaders who will influence our public square. The impact of these young people on our world cannot really be measured in numbers, but only by the work of God in, and through, their lives.



30 YEARS OF THE CARE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME



Rob Newton 2022-2023

Barry Sheerman, Labour MP for Huddersfield

How was working in Parliament?

Working in Parliament was a real eye-opener! It was crazy busy, but also so interesting to see the ins and outs of government. You really pick up the buzz of the place. I came to understand much better the processes behind how laws get made.

Which residential did you go on?

We had two residential trips across the year, and some weekends as well. We went to L'Abri, where we got to know one another and shared stories and presentations about ourselves, and we learnt how to discuss and debate well. We also had a week in Scotland, visiting the Scottish Parliament and spending time debating some core theological topics!

What do you do now?

I now work in the Civil Service within the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, helping with trade policy negotiations around food hygiene in our free-trade agreements.

How did the Leadership Programme prepare you for that?

The Leadership Programme helped me in so many ways: it helped me improve my communication and my written skills, and I learnt a lot about myself. It particularly helped me to develop resilience, not only in seeing projects through, but also in the building up of my character into the person God is making me to be. I also learnt how to love and care for others in a meaningful and compassionate way.

How would you recommend the CARE Leadership Programme?

The Leadership Programme is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I've never seen anything like it before, and it's an amazing experience to get into the heart of politics as a Christian. I was able to discuss the deep theological issues of our day with like-minded Christians, and it's something which will stick with me for the rest of my life. It was a real blessing.

Michael Veitch 2003-2004

Murdo Fraser, MSP for Mid Scotland and Fife



Were there any particular standout moments?

Speech writing and co-writing a chapter of a book with my MSP were particularly memorable. I was also tasked with improving engagement between my MSP and church leaders.

What did you go on to do next?

I went immediately from the Leadership Programme to working for the Scottish Conservative Research Unit at the Scottish Parliament, eventually becoming Head of Research for the Scottish Conservative MSP Group. I then spent five years as an elected councillor, becoming the Local Authority's Depute Leader and Transport spokesperson. I combined this role for a time with working for The Christian Institute in Scotland on specific campaigns. After a period of theological training I then spent 3 ½ years as a pastor in north-east England before returning to Scotland, and shortly thereafter taking up my present role as Scotland Policy Officer back at CARE - literally coming full circle!

How did the Leadership Programme prepare you for that?

The Leadership Programme gave me invaluable experience of working in a political setting, and in the Scottish Parliament specifically, allowing me to 'hit the ground' running when I started working there. The contacts I made during the Scotland-based Friday sessions have proved extremely valuable in my subsequent work, including my current work two decades later.

How would you recommend the CARE Leadership Programme?

I would advise any Christian with a passion for politics, and who is eager to better understand the interface between their faith and their politics, to seize the Leadership Programme with both hands. I cannot recommend it highly enough.

TUESDAY PRAISE
at Witham URC
EVERYBODY WELCOME
December 2023

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LEADER</u>
5th December	Revd. Femi Cole-Njie <small>(Witham Methodist church)</small>
12th December	Pastor Keith Ives <small>(Evangelical church)</small>
19th December	Ian Hardie <small>(WURC)</small>
26th December	no service

TIME: 12.30 - 1pm

TUESDAY PRAISE
at Witham URC
EVERYBODY WELCOME
January 2024

2nd Jan	Marina Price <small>Healing Bus ministry</small>
9th Jan	Vikki Zarb <small>Leader Bible Study</small>
16th Jan	Revd. Stephen Northfield <small>St Andrews Church Hatfield Peverel</small>
23rd Jan	Revd. Lorna Bantock <small>WURC</small>
30th Jan	Ian Hardie <small>WURC</small>

How on earth do we finish this new counter?



This is how!



Someone always cares a Poem provided by Peter Revell

SOMEONE ALWAYS CARES

I'm your little burden bear, I'm plain and rather small.

Even so, someone who loves you, said that I should call.

Hide me underneath your pillow, or sit me on a ~~shelf~~ shelf.

And when you get discouraged, I will do my best to help.

I have a favourite blanket that I snuggle when I'm sad.

It's a present from my granny, made for times when things seem bad.

My granny always told me "Life is like a patchwork quilt,



Just give Jesus all the pieces and he'll take away the guilt."

Sometimes I don't see the pattern, sometimes he seems far away.

Then I clutch my favourite blanket, and pray, and pray, and pray.



Though I don't have all the answers, for I'm just a *burden bear*.

I've been sent here on a mission, from someone who really cares.

When you see me, please remember, you are in my thoughts and

prayers.



The Mitchell 5 Update

Dear Friends,

We've asked for your prayers recently for a few things going on in our life so we wanted to give you an update.

As you know, we take our son Aiden twice a year to the NAPA Centre in America for intensive physiotherapy for 3 weeks at a time. We are pleased to say that this therapy is now available in the UK and is run by NAPA in Harlow, Essex. This will save us lots of time and money in travel plus hopefully in the future Aiden will be able to access weekly speech therapy as well there. Aiden is currently at NAPA Harlow and is working hard for 4 hours a day and this is doing wonders for him.

Also in Aiden news, he recently won his second Pride Of Essex Award. He won in 2015 the Child Of Courage award, this time he won the Tom Dean Ever Smiling award, it's no wonder he won as Aiden always has a smile on his face, even though the adversities he faces every day. It was a very humbling evening hearing all the stories of the other winners in various categories, a night we will never forget.

We are no longer the Mitchell 4! We now have a new arrival, our first daughter was born on November 15th. We named her Harper Quinn, we are absolutely thrilled to announce this news. Aiden and Grayson are super big brothers and thrilled to have a little sister.

After Harper was born, she came home the following day but was readmitted into hospital with jaundice plus Fleur had very high blood pressure (post pre eclampsia) they were both in for six further days but are home again.

We thank you for your continued prayers for our family and also want to thank those at the church who have brought meals to us at home following Harper's birth.

We hope you all have a wonderful Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Love from The Mitchell 5 xxxxxx





The Lord's Larder - Naomi Claxton

If God had a heavenly store cupboard, it would be filled with love, mercy, forgiveness and compassion. He doesn't need a store cupboard though, because his supplies are endless, and they are always there for us. Sadly the same cannot be said of our earthly cupboards, and in these times, more and more people are finding that their food cupboards are empty and they do not have the means to refill them. Recently, members of our church have felt God calling us to do His work in the community by relieving some of this suffering through our Community Pantry.

This is opened for those who are experiencing hard times, and they are able to take dried goods, tins, packets, as well as some frozen food away with them. Those who have used it have described it as a lifeline, and it is a practical way for us to show God's love.

If you are able to support the Community Pantry, it would be valued and appreciated, and will help relieve hardship in our community. One way you could do this is to add an item to your shopping list as often as you can afford to, and donate it to the larder. Here are some ideas of the kinds of things that we are providing:



Tea
Coffee
Sugar
Hot Chocolate
Squash
Long Life Milk
Sugar

Biscuits
Porridge
Oats
Cereal
Jam/Marmalade
Tinned Tomatoes
Soup

Baked Beans
Spaghetti Hoops
Instant Mashed Potatoes
Noodles
Pasta
Rice
Tinned Tuna/Fish
Tinned Meat
Custard
Pasta Sauce/Cooking Sauce

Tinned lentils/beans
Cleaning products
Period products
Washing up liquid
Laundry products
Toiletries
Tinned Fruit
Rice Pudding
Tinned Sponge Puddings

With household budgets being squeezed, we know that not everyone will be in a position to help like this. If you could pray for the pantry, and that it will help bring comfort to those who need it, and help us bring God's love to our community, that would also be very much appreciated.

If you would like to know more about the project, please speak to Heather.

Bob and Jo Stibbards

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the magazine this year, we could not do it without you and this month might be a record as there were 14 contributors!

**Dr. Rev. Peter Stevenson
provided for Jean Moody, Great Totham URC**

We cannot peak too quickly and get to the cradle before the conception; the first trimester and ultrasound; the announcement (with the hope of no complications); the second trimester with associated scans and check-ups; the third trimester when bags get packed, preparatory purchases made and the nursery decorated. At any point along the way Amazon Marketplace may be consulted in case bargains can be found. While the weeks may pass quickly there is nevertheless a lot of waiting. The countdown towards the expected delivery date might be shared by a number of people. Most of the waiting time is used to get everyone and everything ready. But ready for what?

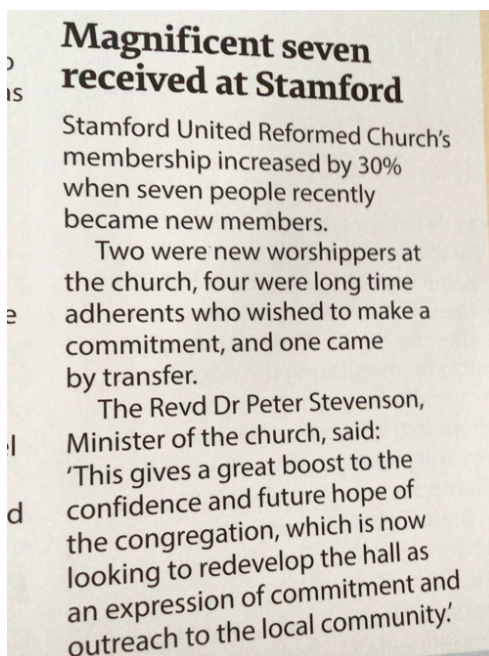
For the mother and father life is likely to change, especially if it is their first child. Uninterrupted sleep may become a distant memory and pamper days may be restricted to the occasional bubble bath without the baby demanding attention. The baby, at best, represents a physical expression of the love shared by a woman and a man; an extension of personalities and a sealing of the covenant made by the couple.

Thinking about Jesus for a moment, and the three parents of his birth (this is going to get complicated). Theologically and biologically, Mary and God are the parents that enter into an agreed and consenting relationship in order to give birth, while Joseph accepts the responsibility of being an earthly father. (In Catholic understanding, Jesus' brothers and sisters can only be born to Joseph through a different relationship as Mary remains a virgin – despite giving birth to Jesus). Mary's trimesters were challenging as she sought acceptance from Joseph; sanctuary with Elizabeth; protection from Herod and travelling mercies along the way. Mary's experience of giving birth reminds us that not every child is fortunate enough to be surrounded by health professionals, sanitized conditions and supportive families – even today.

As the reader knows, I have a vested interest in this subject at this time as I await my first grandchild, a girl due on 14th February 2024. My overwhelming waiting emotion is hope. Hope that everything goes well for mum, dad and bump; hope that I can be a loving, attentive and devoted “Pops”; hope that Granny can get to the hospital at the right time; hope that bump can look forward to a safe, nurturing and fulfilling life. I wonder what Heli (Luke 3:23), or was it Jacob (Matthew 1:16) thought?

Season’s greetings

Magnificent Seven received at Stamford - Jean Moody Great Totham URC



Samaritan's Purse

Photographs provided by Jean Moody Great Totham URC



Preachers at Great Totham URC in December

December 3rd. Ernie Finch from Kelvedon.
December 10th. Trevor Andrews from Kelvedon

December 17th. At 4 pm Our Christmas carol service

A service, led by ourselves, of favourite carols, readings and poems and a talk from Rev. Mark Ambrose.

Tea and mince pies to follow !

December 24th. Sarah Wilson from Witham. Communion.
December 31st Service at Witham

All are welcome to join us at all of our services , they begin at 10:30 am apart from our Carol Service which begins at 4 pm in the afternoon.

You are also welcome to come along to our next coffee morning on Saturday 9th of December at 10 am. Celebrating Christmas, there will be gifts, tombola , cakes, coffee and more.

This year proceeds from our Christmas events will go towards a donation to “The Maldon Pioneers “ which supports adults with special needs .

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

Preachers at Great Totham URC in January

January 7th. Dot Dean
January 14th Pat Goodall
January 21st. Cyril Clarke.
January 28th. Sarah Wilson.

Our January coffee morning will be on Saturday 13th.



"For the next part of our carol-service, Nigel, the verger's nephew will play his interpretation of Silent Night..."

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



Christmas Services 2023

Sunday, 17th December	10.30 am	Nativity - A Messy Church Style Service
	6.30 pm	Traditional Candlelit Carol Service
Christmas Eve	10.30 am	All Age Service
Christmas Day	10.30 am	All Age Christmas Service
New Year's Eve	10.30 am	All Age Service
	11.30 pm	Thanksgiving and Celebration of Life