



HADLEIGH UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Great Meeting
WITH MONKS ELEIGH-



*Providing Family, Celebrating Diversity and Serving the community
Through and For the **LOVE** of Jesus Christ*

Monthly Newsletter
December 2024

VISIT THE WEBSITE:
www.hadleighurc.org.uk



FIND US ON FACEBOOK:
Hadleigh United Reformed Church
Hadleigh URC Messy Church

December 2024 – Newsletter No. 839

Paper copies and YouTube livestreaming of services also available

1st December	10:30am Advent Sunday – Ann Cook
8th December	10:30am All Age Christingle Service – Karen Harman
15th December	4:00 pm Carol Service – Revd Janice White (refreshments afterwards in the Ansell Centre)
22nd December	10:30 am Morning Worship with Holy Communion – Michael Tillett
24th December	5:30pm Preparing for Christmas
Christmas Day	10:30am All Age Informal Christmas Service
29th December	10:30am Morning Worship – led by the congregation

ARTICLES TO THE EDITOR

Please could you let Nigel Crisp have all items for
the December 2024 Newsletter before

Thursday 12th December PLEASE

Email to nigel_crisp@hotmail.com



Dear friends,

As we move towards Christmas I can't help remembering many good Christmases in the past. When I was a child Santa brought us net stockings, edged with red crepe paper, which were full of little toys and treats carefully chosen to keep us busy in the early hours. The memory of moving my feet and hearing that crepe crackle is very special, as it heralded the start of a wonderful day. It filled me with anticipation. I can't help feeling anticipation is the best bit of Christmas!

As we anticipate the birth of Christ there is a lot to look forward. The familiar carols, the giving of gifts, the sense of excitement and promise, the candlelight services, the scent of pine and all the delicious food.

And yet all the wonderfulness has a cost for someone – in time or energy or money. A good celebration of anything involves a whole lot of work!

And then I think of the cost for that man and woman on their journey to Bethlehem two thousand years ago. Travelling under order, no matter the carpentry work turned down and the heavy pregnancy. Fighting through the discomfort and pain, the weariness and the worry. No guaranteed bed at the end... I always think they were rather later than planned to Bethlehem because Mary needed to stop and rest frequently!

Yet all that effort gave us the baby Jesus, our beloved Saviour. From challenge, pain and anxiety came the most wonderful gift of all. Aren't all the best things in life hard won? This particular year Christmas will be very challenging for many families, not just those suffering in many parts of the world but here in our church family. Our thoughts and prayers are with those families.

I would like to share this poem with you at this special time of year. It encapsulates what I believe we must remember, amongst the tinsel and twinkle.

This is the message of Christmas.
Have a peaceful, blessed Christmas everyone.

Karen Harman

The Work of Christmas

By Howard Thurman

**When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flocks,
The work of Christmas begins:**

**To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among the people,
To make music in the heart.**

EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL CHURCH MEETING – Sunday 17th November 2024

At our Church meeting we voted on the proposal to join the Ipswich and East Pastorate. The Elders were delighted that 100% of the members present voted for the proposal and we see this as another indication that this is part of God’s plan for us here at Great Meeting.

All being well with the paperwork, we will formally join the Pastorate on the 1st January 2025 and Revd David Rees will be our Primary Contact Minister. You can read more about David elsewhere in the newsletter. There will be a service to formally welcome us to the Pastorate on Sunday 9th February at 2:30pm. This service will be led by the Moderator, the Revd Lythan Nevard and will include Holy Communion. It will be followed by refreshments in the Ansell Centre.

We give thanks and praise to God for the ways He has been leading us during the vacancy and especially thank those who have led worship during the last eighteen months. We have been blessed by these services and the ways we have grown and developed as a Church. We now look forward with excitement to the next stage of our journey, confident that God has a plan for us in Hadleigh.

Claire

A BRIEF GLIMPSE OF REV DAVID REES

As a new phase of church life starts at Great Meeting, and as I begin as part of your minister team, it is appropriate to introduce myself and précis my background. Many of you will already be aware that I speak with a strange antipodean tongue, but I’m a bit more complicated than that!

I was born in Melbourne, Australia to Welsh immigrant parents, and the youngest of 6 children. My father was a minister in Churches of Christ (one of the constituent churches of the URC in the UK), and my early childhood was in Perth, Western Australia. We moved to Nelson on the north of the South Island of New Zealand when I was 12. I attended High School and early work life in Nelson.

I moved back to Melbourne when I was 20 to work for my brother and his wife who owned a curtain store.

Alongside that, I attended church, initially because the family did, well with a father as a minister we all went. In my early to mid-teens, I realised that I needed to own my faith personally. I made a profession of faith and was baptised by immersion. I have always been involved in the plethora of church life, Sunday school teaching, leading the youth group, deacon, worship-leading, to name just a few.

While in my 20s, alongside my job, I began attending evening classes towards a degree in theology. After 5 years I changed to full-time study towards ordination. As part of my studies, I participated in a fulltime chaplaincy course at a hospital. I met my future wife on that course. Birgit is German and I then spent 8 years in Germany, where we were married. I was unable to become a minister in German and after Birgit was ordained, we began look for a place we could both settle. Long story short, we joined the URC, where after 2 years at Westminster College in Cambridge, I was ordained in 1999 to Christ Church, Rayleigh in Essex. I ministered there for 18 years, adding Bridgewater Dr Church, Southend. I was called to the Ipswich and East Pastorate in 2018.

Along the way, we had 2 children Rebecca and Sebastian who are now both in their 20s. Sadly, Birgit and I separated a few years ago.

My main hobbies are walking – the wind-blown photo of me is at Culver’s Edge in the Peak District a few weeks ago and dabbling in photography.

I am looking forward to getting to know you and ministering with you in the strength of the risen Lord.

David Rees



CHRISTINGLE SERVICE

I hope you are looking forward to our Christingle service on December 8th.

The tradition of the Christingle has its origins in a Moravian Church in Marienborn, Germany. During an advent service in 1747, minister John De Watteville gifted each child in the congregation with a small candle wrapped in a red ribbon. For De Watteville, the candle's flame symbolized Jesus as the Light of the World, while the red ribbon represented the blood of Christ. During the final prayer of the service, de Watteville apparently spoke the words "Lord Jesus, kindle a flame in

these children's hearts, that theirs like Thine become," which made the symbolism of his gifts to the children clear.

Nowadays Christingles are a little different but the message remains the same – to worship the Light of the World and be ready to welcome Him into our lives.

Do come along and bring your friends and family, we will be making Christingles and learning about the symbolism as well as singing some lovely Christmas songs.

I look forward to seeing you there!

Karen



BLYTHSWOOD CARE SHOEBOX 2024 APPEAL

It has been very satisfying this year to have had such a successful result, 134 Christmas boxes and bags off to Kosovo from our church. Just imagine the faces and pleasures these will bring into others lives. Plus we have been able to send an amazing £265 to assist with the transportation.

Many thanks to everyone for the many contributions of support with items and cash donations.

Give thanks for lives changed by the love and hope conveyed by this Blythswood campaign.

If anyone is needing a different idea for Christmas gifts for family or friends who already have all they need, Blythswood Care have supportive gifts to purchase for transforming lives. Prices begin at £5, from their website: [blythswood.org/gift-catalogue](https://www.blythswood.org/gift-catalogue)

Do watch out for a date early next year for a shoebox workshop preparation session.



DUG DUGGIE DUG PRAISE PARTY

Ella, Willow, Sheeba and Claire attended the Praise Party on Sunday 20th October at Sawston URC. The theme was Go Wild. This is Ella's report.



When I went to the Church I saw incredible animals, like a python, lizard and tarantula. I even got to stroke a Bearded Dragon lizard. We learned some different songs and fifteen facts that Duggie told us. It was wonderful to experience all different types of animals. I had so much fun with Willow.



Ella Simon

DECEMBER'S HADLEIGH STORYTELLER'S SESSION

Christmas is always a wonderful time to be in the schools with the children. It's time to soak up the excitement which is held in the atmosphere as Christmas gets that bit closer.

We're looking forward to our session on **Friday December 13th**, telling 'The Christmas Story' in a different way, it will be in poetry form, written by Sarah a member of our team.

Please pray for a happy, refreshing Christmas time for the schools' staff and pupils. Thank you.

Christmas Greetings from The Hadleigh Storyteller's Team

ECO-CHURCH

As you know, we have already achieved our bronze award and we are now working towards a silver award. Just as with the bronze, the silver award is achieved by fulfilling a



number of criteria in different aspects of church life. These are: Worship and Teaching, Buildings, Land, Community and Global Engagement and Lifestyle. In each of these sections there are a number of questions and points are awarded according to the answers given.

This month I am going to tell you about the questions in the Worship and Teaching section. Each question can be answered by ticking a box indicating frequency such as annually, monthly, weekly, occasionally, never.

Here are the questions:

- Special Sundays relating to caring for God's earth (e.g. Creation Time, Environment Sunday, Rogation Sunday etc.) are celebrated in our church
- The hymns and songs (and liturgies if used) in our church services enable us to celebrate God's creation:
- Our church prays for environmental issues
- Caring for God's earth is preached in our church
- Our church hosts guest speakers from A Rocha UK or other Christian environmental organisations (e.g. Christian Aid, Tearfund, Green Christian, The John Ray Initiative) to talk about environmental issues
- Caring for God's earth features as a teaching theme in our church's youth work:
- Caring for God's earth features as a focus of small group study in our church
- Our church's communications (e.g. newsletters, service sheets, magazines, social media etc.) include items relating to the theme of caring for God's earth
- The leadership have made a formal commitment to improving the environmental credentials of our church by endorsing the undertaking of work towards an Eco Church Award.

Next month I will tell you about the questions in a different aspect of Eco-church. If anyone would like to be involved in any way with Eco-church please do speak to me. It would be good to have a group of people committed to this very important area of church life.

Jan

A ROCHA TIPS FOR A GREENER CHRISTMAS

1) **Start with your advent calendar.** Support overseas farmers by ensuring that your advent calendar, and any Christmas chocolate, is [Fairtrade](#). You'll be helping

those farmers to make a decent living, and encouraging them to farm in a more ecologically sustainable way with every bite.

2) **Rent a tree.** Did you know that, in the UK, 6-8 million real Christmas trees go to landfill every year? With a [Christmas tree rental scheme](#) you can enjoy a real tree knowing that it will be replanted later. Alternatively, dress up a living tree in your garden – add lots of bird feeders and fat balls, and some outdoor fairy lights to make a feast for your eyes and the birds. Or, visit the [British Christmas Tree Growers Association](#) to find out about buying an organic, FSC-certified, or locally grown Christmas tree.

3) **Go for a natural wreath and decorations.** Holly sprigs, ivy trails, pinecones, rose hips... Take a bag, go for a walk, and see what you can find! Make sure that you have permission from the land-owner before you start snipping. Don't take too much and do leave some berries for the birds. Source as much as you can from what's already dropped. Then get creative and make a beautiful wreath and Christmas decorations from natural materials.

4) **Re-use cards and wrapping.** Help reduce the huge amount of trees that go into making Christmas tags by re-using old Christmas cards. Recycle the section that carries the greeting, cut out the picture and use that as a tag. You could use fabric remnants and ribbons to make simple, drawstring gift bags in various sizes. Use these for



your family and close friends and they could be reused for years to come. Recycled brown paper has a much lower ecological footprint than Christmas wrapping paper. Young children might enjoy decorating it and that might buy you five minutes to get all those other Christmas jobs done!

5) **Create homemade gifts.** Baked goods for example, or buy gifts from a charity shop – you'll be amazed at what can be found. You could buy an attractive glass or vase and fill it with chocolates or flowers. Kilner jars, and other glass jars, filled with small items also make attractive gifts.

6) **Make sure your gifts don't cost the earth.** Many beauty products contain palm oil. Its production causes mass deforestation, air pollution and human rights abuses. Read labels carefully. Avoid products with unsustainable palm oil

7) **Give the gift of time.** Too many unwanted gifts end up in landfill. Here's an idea. What about a gift of cooking for someone once a month for a year, taking them for a coffee, babysitting, house cleaning... or whatever. Just make a 'gift of time gift voucher' and put it in a card for them.

8) **Dim the lights but not the joy!** LED Christmas lights help to save energy and money. You could make your table festive with some candles, scented ones perhaps. Use eco-friendly candles made from beeswax, soy or other vegetable alternatives – avoid paraffin-based candles. And empty jars with some ribbon make beautiful DIY candle-holders.

9) **Remember the reason for the season.** Practising generosity and hospitality is a great way to show Christ's love at Christmas. Invite someone who'd otherwise be on their own, to join you on Christmas Day. It's also a way of reducing energy consumption as they'll share your heating and cooking!

10) **Try a meat-free Christmas meal.** A high-meat diet causes environmental problems, be it overgrazing of land, pollution, or the intensive use of water or fossil fuels. Have a conversation about this with the people you'll be eating with. Would they consider a meat-free Christmas? Would they be willing to try a tasty new vegetarian recipe? If you do eat meat, make sure it's free-range or organic, and buy it from a local farmer or independent retailer.

11) **Recycle right.** More waste ends up being disposed over Christmas than during the rest of the year, so it's a great time to review your recycling set up. Don't forget – most wrapping paper is not recyclable. You can test it by doing the 'scrunch' test. If it springs back, it isn't recyclable. And always remove the sellotape before recycling.

12) **Carry on caring for God's earth** throughout the year. Nature needs us more than ever. By giving regularly to A Rocha UK, you'll be helping nature flourish here in the UK.

REPORT FROM NOVEMBER ELDER'S MEETING

We had a full agenda for our meeting with the usual items to discuss. Safeguarding was discussed in detail following Karen's online training about Safer Recruitment and verifying DBS checks (Disclosure and Barring Service) which is an organisation that helps ensure the safety of children and vulnerable adults. All Elders now need to have had a DBS check. All Elders have completed Foundation Safeguarding Training.

We also discussed the arrangements for the Extraordinary Church Meeting on 17th November. We decided on the recommendations we would make to the Meeting about the percentage required, that it would be a secret ballot and to ask two tellers who are not Church members.

Arrangements for Advent and Christmas were agreed and how the Wreaths Display could be organised. Thanks to all those who will be giving up their time to ensure the Church looks festive and to those who will be leading worship during this busy time.

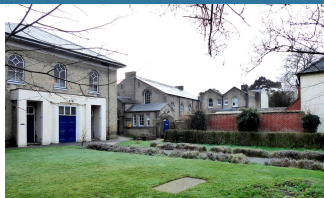
Claire

HADLEIGH - CARE IN THE COMMUNITY

ORGANISATION	TEL	ISSUE
AA National Line	01473 212224 0800 917 7650	Alcoholics Anonymous
Disability Advice Bureau	01473 217313	Local Support and Claims
Leading Lives	07860798362	Support for Learning disability
Wednesday Lunch Club	07719 496112	Lunches
First Lunch Club	01473 808835	Lunches
Samaritans National Line	01473 287727 116 123	Life support concerns
Sue Ryder	01473 295200	Nursing Home
Hadleigh DAA	07976 603805	Local dementia support
Alzheimer's Society	0333 150 3456	National Helpline
Benefit Enquiry Line	0800 882 200	Direct Gov UK
Age UK	0800 678 1602	Support, advice
Frank National Line	0300 123 6600	Advice about drugs
Parentline	0808 800 2222	Parenting Issues
Domestic Violence	0808 2000 247	Women's Aid
Police Suffolk	101	Non -Emergency Number
Sensing Change	01473 260030	Support for independent living
Hadleigh Health Centre	01473 822961	Health
NHS 111	111	Non-emergency issues
Child Helpline	0800 1111	Support for children
NSPCC	0808 8005000	Child neglect
Waterfield House	01473 944654	Care Home
Hadleigh Nursing Home	01473 858982	Care Home
Magdalen House	01473 829411	Care Home
Canterbury House	0800 032 1304	Care Home
Babergh District Council	0300 1234000	Local issues
Disability Living All'nce	0800 121 4600	Direct Gov UK benefits
Child Death Helpline	0800 282 986	Support
Gam Care	0808 802 0133	Gambling Issues
National Debt Helpline	0808 808 4000	Debt Issues
Missing People	116 000	Missing relative
Cruse Bereavement	0808 808 1677	Bereaved People helpline
Elder Abuse Helpline	0800 069 9784	Abuse of older people
MIND	0300 123 3393	Mental Well-being
Citizens Advice Bureau	01473 219777	Advice – legal, debt, housing, etc
National Grid	0800 111 999	Report gas leak
UK Power Networks	0800 316 3105 105	Loss of electrical power

Where We Meet

Great Meeting
United Reformed Church
Market Place, Hadleigh,
Suffolk, IP7 5DL



Monks Eleigh Chapel
and HOME Retreat
The Street, Monks Eleigh,
Suffolk, IP7 7JE



Contacts

Minister

Vacant (Interim Moderator Revd John Cook)

Serving Elders

Claire Coster (Church Secretary) 01473 822850

Nigel Crisp

Chloe Elmer

Jan Dicks

01473 823413

Ric Lambert

01473 828547

Paul Simon

01473 829171

Ann Swallow

01473 806711

*Please feel free to contact any of the above
at any time of day (or night in case of emergency),
if you have any problem that the church may
be able to help with.*

Treasurer

Tom Gordon

10 Clopton Gardens,
Hadleigh, IP7 5JG

treasurer@hadleighurc.org.uk

07825 641154

Room Bookings - Hadleigh

Ric Lambert 07579 044131

admin@hadleighurc.org.uk

Room Bookings - Monks Eleigh

Ronnie Howson 01473 310169

Newsletter Editor

nigel_crisp@hotmail.com

Registered Charity No 1151084