



The
United
Reformed
Church



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
November 2025

VISIT THE WEBSITE:
www.hadleighurc.org.uk



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

November 2025 – Newsletter No. 849

2nd November 10:30 am – Michael Tillett
with Junior Church

9th November 10:30 am – Revd Adam Earle –
Holy Communion,
Remembrance Service,
& Junior Church

16th November 10:30 am – Paul Simon

23rd November 10:30 am – Revd Janice White –
All Age

30th November 10:30 am – Revd John Cook –
Advent 1
with Junior Church

7th December 3:30 pm – Karen Harman –
Advent 2
Christingle

ARTICLES TO THE EDITOR

Please could you let Paul Simon have all items for
the **December and January** Newsletter before

Thursday 20th November PLEASE

Email to danton89@hotmail.com



CHURCHES
TOGETHER in HADLEIGH



Working to become
**Dementia
Friendly**
2016-2018



Letter from our Minister: More Than Just a Friendly Hello

“Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.” — Romans 15:7

Churches are often very good at talking about being “welcoming.” We print it on banners, put it on our websites, and say it from the front. And that’s a good thing! A smile at the door, a warm handshake, someone to show you where the coffee is—all of that matters. First impressions shape how people feel, and hospitality is a deeply biblical virtue.

But welcome is one thing, inclusion goes a step further. Though they are related, they aren’t quite the same thing. *Welcome* is the open door. *Inclusion* is having a real place at the table. Think of it like hosting a dinner party. A guest who rings the bell is welcomed in: coat taken, drink offered, polite conversation made. But inclusion happens when they feel free to join the chatter around the table, help themselves to seconds, or even wash up at the end. It’s when they stop being “the guest” and start being “part of the family.”

Church can be like that too. We might welcome people in with smiles and tea and the news sheet. But inclusion happens when their voices are genuinely heard, their stories valued, their gifts shared. Inclusion isn’t just “letting people in.” It’s

recognising that they belong—not as visitors, but as co-creators of the church community.

Romans 15:7 reminds us to “*welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you.*” And how has Christ welcomed us? Not as guests on probation, but as beloved children of God. Jesus didn’t just let people follow him politely from the edge of the crowd; he sat with them, ate with them, trusted them with ministry, gave them a voice. That’s inclusion.

True inclusion often happens in small, practical ways. It might mean giving someone a role, listening to their ideas, changing our language to make it easier for newcomers, or making sure leadership reflects the breadth of who we are. It’s also about being willing to *change* as a community, not expecting others to simply fit in to how things have always been.

A church can be warm and friendly without being truly inclusive. But a church that is both welcoming and inclusive reflects something of God’s kingdom: a place where there are no outsiders, only fellow children of God, gathered around the same table. So perhaps the question for us isn’t just, “Are we welcoming?” but, “Are we making room for people to belong?”

Blessings,
David

Report from the Elders' Meeting on 6th October

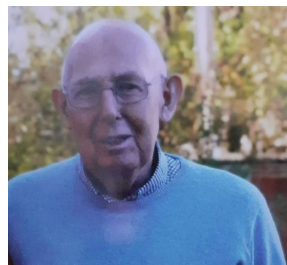
The Elders met with a focus for the meeting on finance. The agenda included the usual range of items but we tried to focus on prayer and finance.

The Church is a registered charity and so every year we have to submit a report to the Charity Commission. We are very grateful to Ronnie who has organised this for many years. It includes a report on what has happened in the Church and also a copy of our audited accounts. Many thanks also to Tom who prepared and submitted the accounts to the Accountant and answered the questions, so that these could be signed off. The report was for the year 2024 and the deadline was 31st October. You can view our submission if you go to the Charity Commission Website.

We also spent time discussing the Ministry & Mission contribution asked for by the Eastern Synod which is paid to the United Reformed Church. There has been an increase of 5.7% which is an increase of £1,776 for 2026. After a long discussion it was decided that the Elders would recommend that, as a minimum we would pay the same as this year - £31, 272 but would not commit to paying the extra amount until we were more confident of being able to afford this extra amount. The income from offerings is less than it was and there are not the number of people regularly attending worship to meet this extra amount. As reported in the September newsletter, we are hoping that people will review the amount they give as an offering. The Ministry & Mission Fund should be our first financial commitment as a Church because it pays for the stipends of the ministers in the URC and also the pensions of retired ministers. Please do pray about this situation.

Claire

MERVYN CORT



Mervyn lived his life with a deep personal faith that underpinned all he did.

Mervyn was a doer. He could discuss his faith with insight and wisdom, but his way of life, his approach to faith, was to do things to help others. Always without a fanfare.

Some of these were small things – a lift, a card, a kindly enquiry, but others were hugely time consuming and important – like saving the church thousands of pounds by finding good deals on electricity and gas and pursuing the companies relentlessly to ensure we were always on the best rates. He had an eye for detail and was meticulous about records and minutes, so many a thankless task in church was quietly sorted by Mervyn.

Mervyn was very much a family man, enjoying wonderful holidays with Gill and loving time with his daughter Alison who was, he told me 'a great blessing'. They both enjoyed nothing more than spending time with their grandsons Otto and Felix. When he became poorly, some years ago, he fought the illness, as he lived his life, in a calm, organised but determined way. Every second he could have with his family he wanted.

Mervyn poured his life into the church, being an Elder for many years as Synod representative he attended countless meetings, encouraging youngsters to take part too. He instigated the visit of Life Expo and wrote bids for grants and kept a practical eye on all the campus. He was not afraid to speak up when necessary but many of his kindnesses were quiet and personal.

Mervyn and I shared a lifelong background in education and he had a huge catalogue of interesting stories about life in schools. He had experienced a variety of different roles from teacher to inspector and told his tales with lots of expression – so we often laughed a lot. There was never anything sharp or unkind though, all was laced with an enduring patience over human failings and a desire to

support and encourage. He and Gill offered Tony and I lots of loving support in recent years. In the letter to Timothy we read 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.' That is what Mervyn did.

Rest in peace Mervyn, we miss you.
Karen

DAVID GRUTCHFIELD AND THE SCHOOL HOUSE

A further memory shared



Our good friend David Grutchfield, who died in September, had a great concern for people's housing and believed that everyone had a right to have a roof over their head.

In 1989 Hadleigh United Reformed Church had gone through two bad experiences regarding the renting of its property known as the School House which adjoins the Ansell Centre. The question for the church was 'what do we do next?' David Grutchfield at that time was a councillor on the Babergh District Council and picked up on the local need to provide temporary accommodation for those without a home. David connected that need with the School House and with the minister at the time, Rev Glyn Millington, brought parties together and the future of the School House was secured.

After 36 years the initiative continues. It helps the church's finances, but more than that, many hundreds of individuals must have benefitted greatly from being accommodated at short notice and for a short while in the School House.

And so David's vision lives on!

Nigel

Commitment for Life is the URC's world justice programme. We, at Hadleigh URC, send money regularly to Commitment for Life. As a congregation we voted many years ago to support their work in Bangladesh. That is why you often read stories from Bangladesh in the newsletter. However, Commitment for Life also supports work in Gaza so this month I thought I would include a piece about Gaza. It's written by Andy Braunston, the URC's Minister for Digital Worship. It is a little out of date as it was written before the ceasefire, but still moving and thought-provoking.

“Flight into Egypt”

Have a look at this picture... What do you see?

This painting was created by Sliman Mansour, an artist in Palestine. His style which has come to symbolise Palestinian national identity has inspired generations of Palestinian and international artists.



Using symbols derived from Palestinian life, culture, history, and tradition, Mansour illustrates Palestinians' resolve and connection with their land. With women wearing traditional embroidered dresses, he represents Palestinian land and protest. With images of Jerusalem and the glistening Dome of the Rock, he represents the Palestinian homeland and the dream of return.

He's called this piece the “Flight into Egypt”. If you have time, remind yourself of the story in Matthew 2, 13 – 23, which describes how Mary and Joseph with baby Jesus escaped King Herod by fleeing to Egypt as refugees.

Reflection

The Holy Family, when facing danger and death, were able to find sanctuary in Egypt. Today Palestinians wait to see if the Israeli Defence Forces will continue their relentless

military action and move them from Rafah – where they were sent for safety. The border is sealed but there is speculation the Egyptians are building a pen in the desert, with no facilities, to “house” displaced Palestinians. Safety is tantalisingly close yet impossible to get to. The Palestinian mother and child try, in vain, to get to the safety of Egypt; in this picture we also see the plight of displaced, bombed, and starved Palestinians. The woman and child are fed by the UN Relief agency – now condemned and hampered in its mission by Israel which maintains it has been used by Hamas.

Around the world ordinary people react with horror to the treatment of the Palestinians; anger, rage, and grief at the atrocities in October are now held alongside desperate emotions at the plight of the Palestinians – bombed, starved, displaced and condemned by a superior military force, possibly eager for more of their land, aided and abetted by many of the world's great powers. Dissent is demonised as anti-Semitic. Games are played in Parliament to spare the blushes of politicians who should know better; vetoes are wielded in the UN to stop even the mildest criticism. A weak archbishop won't meet a Palestinian pastor because he doesn't like the company the pastor keeps. Meanwhile mothers and their children are left to their plight.

Palestinian artists who depict Jesus as Palestinian have been sharply criticised yet art, like theology, pushes boundaries and offers new understanding. Jesus can be authentically depicted in many ways; he identifies with Jew and Gentile, male and female, slave and free, Israeli, and Palestinian. Yet depiction is not enough; art, like theology, must lead to action. Jesus, told us, after all, to recognise him in the least.

Jesus personifies the poor, forsaken, homeless, hungry, thirsty, and naked. In today's world Jesus is to be found in many places but not least with the millions of Palestinian

refugees seeking to find shelter and safety – as once his parents found refuge in Egypt.

A Prayer for Gaza's Children

God who clothes us in warm garments of grace;
weave this cry for Gaza into the fabric of your peace...
We are ashamed at the depth to which humanity can sink;
how eagerly we march to the drumbeat of war;
how easily we are seduced by violence justifying narratives.
Mend our broken ways;
challenge our complacency;
protect the children of Gaza;
grant their families freedom from oppression,
and bring Shalom to all who call The Holy Land home.



As you know, we at Hadleigh URC, as have all the other churches in the Ipswich and East Pastorate, attained our bronze Eco award. We haven't yet made any real progress towards our silver award – although it's quite likely that we are already fulfilling some of the requirements which just need to be formalised. Thanks to Brian Dicks for building a log pile in the wild area, which will provide sanctuary for a variety of minibeasts during the winter

One of the targets in the "Lifestyle" section was fulfilled on Sunday 12th October when David's service was entitled "How does your Garden Grow?"

Our church recognises that private gardens and other outdoor spaces can make a significant contribution to nature and encourages members to manage their own or local outdoor spaces for nature in some way.

David and Adam will be preaching on the same topic in all the churches in the pastorate.

November's Eco Tip from A Rocha UK

Measure your carbon footprint.

Take an audit of your individual or household carbon footprint and repeat each year to see if you can reduce it! There are lots of ways to do this, from switching energy suppliers to changes in your diet.

Some great tools to use are available, for example the carbon calculators provided by Climate Stewards at climatestewards.org/carbon-calculators, and Creation Care creationcare.org.uk offers a specific resource for households, giving ideas and helping you track your progress.

As you look at different areas of your life, offer each area or action to God as an offering.

Jan and Claire

Prayer Meditation on Peace by Richard Skinner

Shared at the Taizé Service at St Joseph's Church

Peace is not a thing to possess	but a way of possessing
Peace is not a gift to be given	but a way of giving
Peace is not a topic to teach	but a way of teaching
Peace is not a theory to learn	but a way of learning
Peace is not an opinion to hold	but a way of holding
Peace is not a resolution of strife	but a way of striving
Peace is not a creed to preach	but a way of preaching
Peace is not a God to serve	but a way of serving
Peace is not a question to ask	but a way of asking
Peace is not an answer to seek	but a way of seeking
Peace is not a journey's end	but a way of journeying.

Suffolk Historic Churches Ride and Stride

Thanks to Dave Coster, Jan Dicks and Janice White for completing the Bike Ride this year. They raised £417 and there was also a donation of £100, making a total of £517 raised this year. The Church will receive 50% of this.



SAMARA'S AID LUNCH

Sunday 16th Nov after church

Remember to join us for fellowship over baked potato lunches and some live musical entertainment afterwards. There is a sign up list at the back of the church.

Maureen and Hilary

HADLEIGH STORYTELLERS

Our November story on Monday 10th at Hadleigh Community Primary School & St Marys Primary School is 'The Tale of Two Houses'. The story of the wise and foolish men, from Matthew 7.

Please keep the team and the schools in your prayers. Thank you.

Hilary

Doreen Riddleston

Doreen's family would like to express their thanks to all relatives, friends and neighbours for the cards of condolence, words of comfort, kind support and sympathy shown to them during their recent sad time. Special thanks and appreciation go to Nigel who conducted the service at the crematorium and the thanksgiving service, which would have been Doreen's 92nd birthday. Thanks are also expressed to others who contributed at the thanksgiving service. Both uplifting services.

Many thanks also to all who helped with refreshments after the thanksgiving service, it was much appreciated.

Donations in Doreen's memory amounted to £354 and this amount has been forwarded to Cancer Research UK, which was her wish.

Doreen's Family



The pastorate Link Bible Studies for the remainder of 2025 will take place as follows:

10:00am Thursday 6th November

Theme: Esther (Esther 2:7-11 & 17)

10:00am Thursday 4th December

Theme: Mary the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:46-55)

As usual the meetings will be held online via Zoom. ID 889 953 6542, or you can join by telephone by calling 0208 0806592 when the meeting starts.

We won't meet on the first Thursday in January (this is New Years' Day) so will resumed on 5th February 2026 when we will begin a new themed series.

BLYTHSWOOD CHRISTMAS SHOEBOX APPEAL

Bringing warmth, joy and hope this Christmas.

WOW 151!!



Yes, we have successfully achieved filling 151 shoeboxes and bags. What a great team of helpers we have had to accomplish this and what wonderful companionship we have had.

Many thanks to everyone in whichever way you have contributed.

Your generosity, helps to make others everyday lives that little bit easier.

Please do have a look at the Blythswood Christmas gift catalogue booklet at the back of church for alternative everlasting meaningful gifts which will assist others in their struggles with daily life.

Blessings Hilary

Thursday November 20th at 2 pm Band Concert

Everyone is invited to a brass band concert in our church. The Ipswich over 50s brass band will be playing a charity concert for the Memories Café and friends. They came in March (see photo) and were absolutely brilliant and they loved our venue. Do put this date in your diary. You will be most welcome. Arrive from 1.30 pm.



HAZEL WILDING 1943 – 2025

Our dear friend Hazel Wilding sadly passed in the Lord's keeping on Saturday 4th October.

Hazel Rolfe was born in Semer. The family moved to Bradfield Crescent in 1951 and with her sister Brenda were regular scholars in the Sunday School of the Congregational Church (now URC). Hazel became a member of the church in 1957 and was well involved in the church activities. The photograph shows Hazel (on the right) with Doreen Riddleston at a Guild outing in 1959.



The Guild members played tennis and it was at these events that Hazel met Kenneth Wilding. Ken and Hazel were married at our Church in 1965. Sixty years of happy and devoted marriage supporting each other and their growing family into great grandparenthood. And quietly supporting other children in particular need.



Hazel sang in the Church choir and enjoyed the trips organised by our organist Rennie Dawson to the big praise events at the Methodist Central Hall in London. She was a renowned baker, remembered for her apple pies at the Harvest Suppers. She was deeply involved in the shoebox work at the depot when that was at Vauxhall Farm, Wenham.

Guided by the way of Jesus, Hazel was a quiet and gently spoken lady who did kind things.

Thank you for your example, rest in peace.

Nigel

Eastern Synod on Saturday 11th October

George and Chloe Elmer and I travelled to Christ Church URC in Chelmsford to attend the Eastern Synod. We were very fortunate that Chloe's SAT NAV recognised the build up of traffic due to an accident on the A12 and sent us on a different road so we arrived in plenty of time. Some other members were delayed by over 30 minutes.

The theme for this Synod was Inclusion and Diversity. There was a presentation by the Revd Andrew Dotchin who is a Trustee for the Inclusive Church. He talked about the work of the Inclusive Church and showed us a video. You can view the video – Make Room at the Inn by visiting the website – www.inclusive-church.org We can all make small changes which will make a big difference to people feeling included. We also had presentations by Richard Lewney (he led our Christian Aid Service in May) about how Bar Hill Church had welcomed people who were asylum seekers and their families. Alison Jiggins who talked about the importance of using first person language – e.g. talking about people who are homeless rather than the homeless. She explained that many adjectives like homeless, poor, disabled are now used as nouns. She explained that it is better to use the language 'people who are ...' It helps us to see the person as a whole and not defined by one characteristic.

There was also a video showing the work of the Dove Dementia Café in Diss which won the Community Project Award. We saw Ruth, Elizabeth's daughter, who coordinates the Dementia Café. Congratulations to the group for winning the award.

After lunch there was the business part of the Synod with reports from the Synod Clerk, two people who had attended General Assembly and reports from the committees. Time was spent discussing the funding that the Synod might give towards the new shared Church Life Fund (CLF) which will resource shared services, lay workers grants

and grants for new communities of discipleship and worship. It was decided that more information was needed and so this will be brought to the March 2026 Synod.

It was good to meet together as a Synod but I was struck by how the Synod is reflecting what is happening in our local churches – many of the ‘old familiar faces’ are no longer there and the attendance is much lower than it used to be. Everyone is welcome to attend Synod but only the representatives can vote. If you are interested in coming along, the next Synod will be on 14th March 2026 at Christ Church Braintree.

Claire

Naught to do with crosses

A great deal has been said in recent weeks about the epidemic of flag flying in public spaces.

Rather less effort has been expended in examining the proliferation of crosses raised aloft during demonstrations. There was certainly a rash of them at the recent Stephen Yaxley-Lennon-curated Unite the Kingdom Rally.

Could this be further evidence of the return to faith suggested in The Quiet Revival, a recent study by the Bible Society that suggested young people were returning to our churches?

Probably not. Or not yet.

For these demonstrations have been anything but quiet. And the messages being shouted out are less about the revival of a Jesus-faithful witness and more a recapitulation of the anger and intolerant legalism of the Pharisees – Jesus’s enemies.

Now, I must confess at my own queasiness of crosses and indeed any object which becomes a misdirected focus for zeal, religious or otherwise, rather than the loving Word of God.

After all, I’m a member of a longstanding non-conformist fellowship whose antecedents can be traced back to before the English Civil War. In Parliament, on the streets and within the New Model Army, independents were at the forefront in opposing the idolatrous and ruinous rule of Charles Stuart.

The focal point of our church today is an open Bible upon an open table.

All are equally called – and welcome - to follow Jesus Christ. All are equal in, through and because of the Christ.

I admit that we do have a couple of crosses on display, but they are positioned in the margins for the purposes of reflective personal or group prayer.

Crosses wielded as weapons among angry crowds at events organised by activists of a certain and specific provenance are the antithesis of the faithful Christian life devoted to peace and reconciliation.

Crosses used to symbolise that 'we' are somehow a Christian nation and a better one than any other is both an untruth and a blasphemy.

Crosses raised to intimidate 'them' is a calumny against the Jesus revealed in the Gospels who was a refugee, spoke truth to corrupting power and reached out with love to all, but especially the poor, the vulnerable and the marginalised.

All of these are expressions of Christian nationalism.

Christian nationalism seeks to make exclusive what is inclusive.

Christian nationalism seeks to divide rather than include.

Christian nationalism seeks to dominate others as opposed to serving others.

We are all sinners, but Christian nationalism is an especially great sin. As Paul the Apostle wrote in Galatians 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus".

What is to be done?

Firstly, church leaders here in Suffolk really need to speak out unequivocally from every pulpit and in every sermon and condemn this misappropriation of the Cross. Not in our name.

Use the cross to intimidate? You're no Christian, brother. You're no Christian, sister.

But then secondly, fellowships across the county need to reach out to these our fellow citizens to temporarily invert Jesus's admonition to disciples to take up their Cross and follow me.

Put down that cross and come and talk with us! Open the Bible and open your heart. Our churches are certainly open to you.

Maybe then the Quiet Revival will truly begin?

(From an article first published on LinkedIn)

Paul Simon

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
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Monks Eleigh Chapel
and HOME Retreat
The Street, Monks Eleigh,
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