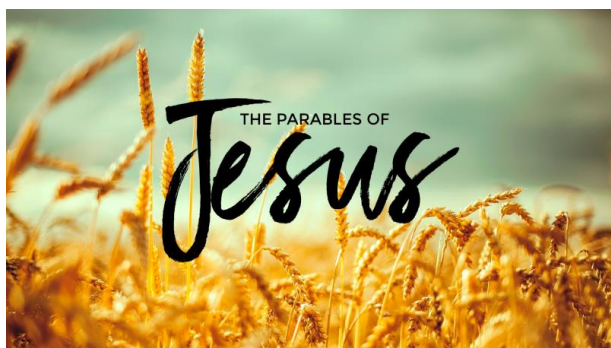




HADLEIGH UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Great Meeting
WITH MONKS ELEIGH



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

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
January 2024

VISIT THE WEBSITE:
www.hadleighurc.org.uk



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

January 2024 – Newsletter No. 828

Paper copies and YouTube livestreaming of services also available

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 7th Jan | 10:30am Morning Worship led by Ronnie Howson |
| 14th Jan | 10.30am Morning Worship with Holy Communion led by Rev'd John Cook |
| 21st Jan | 10.30am Morning Worship led by Rev'd Janice White. |
| 28th Jan | All Age Worship led by Michael Tillett and team. |
| 4th Feb | 10.30 am Morning Worship led by Rev'd Lythan Nevard |

Also in Church MID WEEK PRAYER Wednesdays at 10.30am

ARTICLES TO THE EDITOR

Please could you let Paul Simon have all items for the
FEBRUARY 2024 Newsletter before
Thursday 14th January PLEASE
Email to danton89@hotmail.com



NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

Seven years ago I made a New Year's Resolution which I have managed to keep. It was to not make any more New Year's Resolutions. It has not been difficult to achieve and I have not been feeling guilty about breaking resolutions as I had done prior to that.

2024 sees the start of what is possibly the first of a few full years without a minister. I decided to make a New Year's Resolution this year finally breaking that resolution I made seven years ago.

With the interregnum now into its 6th month and likely to continue for quite a few more months or years it is incumbent upon us to address the issues which face Hadleigh URC. The most pressing of which seems to be the decline in membership and attendance at services. This is not only a problem for our congregation but for many congregations throughout the U.K.

It is not and never should be about getting more members for our congregation but should be about getting more people into the Kingdom of God. As it says in Matthew 28:16-20 *'The eleven disciples went to the hill in Galilee where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him, even though some of them doubted. Jesus drew near and said to them, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age."*

We all have the Holy Spirit as our counsellor and guide and we should ask Him for help to fulfil the command given by Jesus in the above passage. Anything we can do to further God's Kingdom here on earth should be done. I can remember when I was taking part in 'The Walk of a Thousand' men back in the early 90's the one thing to remember is that it is rarely given to you to pray the prayer of commitment with a new Christian but every interaction with a non-believer is like watering plants. For plants to grow, blossom and thrive they need food, water and sunlight.

The food is the word of God. As it says in Matthew 4:4 *"It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God.'"*

By bringing the Word of God to others we are doing the watering. Sharing our faith with others is what is called for here, although we should not be overbearing or threatening in any way. More by living the Christian life and by showing that having Christ in your life is uplifting and beneficial to us will encourage them to ask the question 'what do they have that I want'.

Jesus is the light of the world. John 8:12 says *'When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."'* What God wants and we should also want is to bring the Kingdom of God here, now and forever to all peoples of the Earth. John 14:6 says *'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'*

The emphasis here is maintaining a credible and obvious witness in the world, a witness that shows us to be faithful, God-honouring, trustworthy, sincere, earnest, and honest in all that we do. Also, we should always be ready to give an account of the hope that we have for the gospel. The light we have is not to be covered, but made obvious for all to see and benefit from, that they, too, may leave the darkness and come into the Light.

I hope you have a fruitful Year and peace comes to Earth for all peoples everywhere. For you in particular I hope that God's blessings and favour be with you as 2024 begins and remains with you throughout the year.

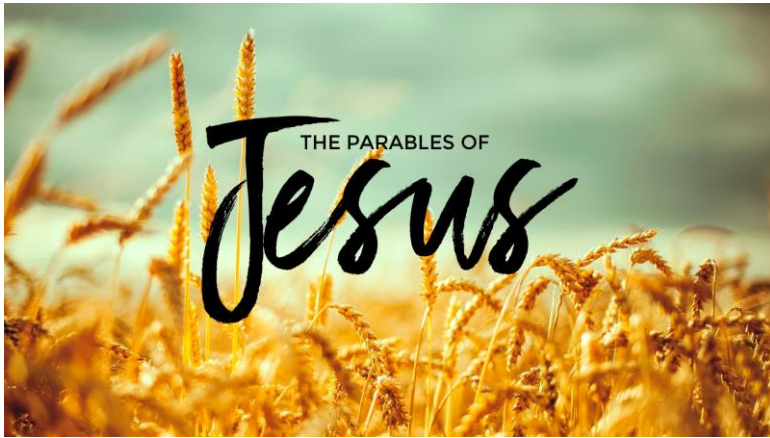
So my New Year's resolution for this year is to do more in fulfilling the command given by Jesus in Matthew's gospel. Will you do the same?

Ric Lambert

PRAYING THE STREETS DURING JANUARY

This month we will be remembering those in the following streets: Week beginning:

| | |
|--------|---|
| 7 Jan | The Green + Tower Mill Lane + Millers Close |
| 14 Jan | Timperley Road + Timperley Close |
| 21 Jan | Wentworth Close + Dyers Court + Buckenham Road + Meriton Rise |
| 28 Jan | Wilson Road + The Granary + Banks Close + Dunn Close |



BRING A PARABLE!

I think parables are like chewy braising steak: it takes time and energy to release their wonderful sustenance!

Recently, as we've been faithfully following the lectionary readings for the year, we've encountered a range of these challenging yet wonderfully earthly expressions of divine truths. As an accepting, affirming and inclusive fellowship there are likely to be lots of different interpretations to share (this is a good thing!).

As a result, Jan has come up with a great idea: why don't we set up an informal group to reflect upon parables that have particular resonance or which raise specific issues or questions in our hearts?

So, we're now putting it out there to see who might be interested in joining us for short (say 60 minutes or so) monthly discussions to learn from each other and, hopefully, deepen our understanding of what Our Lord Jesus Christ is telling us about the Kingdom of God.

Please let either Jan or myself know if you're interested and maybe which Parable you'd like to bring before the group?

Thank you!

Jan & Paul

MONKS ELEIGH

Monks Eleigh United Reformed Church is part of our pastorate: we are one Church Meeting.

Friends from the village joined in our Carol Service in the chapel, set in a café style. The service remembered the many places of unrest around the world which no longer make newspaper headlines. In particular focus was given to the Samara's Aid Appeal for the support of people in Syria. Over £170 was raised.



CHRISTMAS FREEDOM

(I recently came across the following words of Christmas wisdom which I share for your reflection over the festive period and the New Year. Nigel)

[Looking at the many images of the nativity] I ask what is this little baby offering to his mother, to Mary, and to you and me? He is offering freedom. That is what the people in the time of Jesus were waiting for -- freedom and peace. That is what we are still waiting for: freedom for ourselves; freedom in Syria; freedom in Jesus' own country, Israel and Palestine; freedom in Afghanistan; in South Africa and many other countries in Africa and around the world.

Everyone wants to be free. But Freedom does not mean that you can do whatever you like. There exists a false interpretation of freedom. Freedom goes hand in hand with responsibilities. A married person is not totally free where his wife and children are concerned. A friend is not totally free where their friend is concerned. A Christian is not totally free with regard to the Church as a community. No individual is totally free. You cannot be totally free from God.

If freedom is to be authentic, that is, genuinely liberating, it must make room for others for fidelity to other people and even more to God. Our freedom is the effect of Jesus' obedience as a man. That is the mysterious gift at Christmas. That little child Jesus was totally free and yet when he grew up he

repeated all the time that he came to do the will of God. He was obedient to his Father's will even to death. That is the challenge for you and me. The incarnation liberates us, makes us free but it does not work by magic. We have to fight for it.

We are continuously presented with artificial means of oblivion as a way of escaping moral struggle and moral obligation. A lot of pressure is put on parents and young people which curbs our freedom. Watch how most people celebrate Christmas. If you have courage to enter on the path of freedom offered to you by Christ today, you will become certain that freedom and liberation are only to be won through suffering and humiliation.

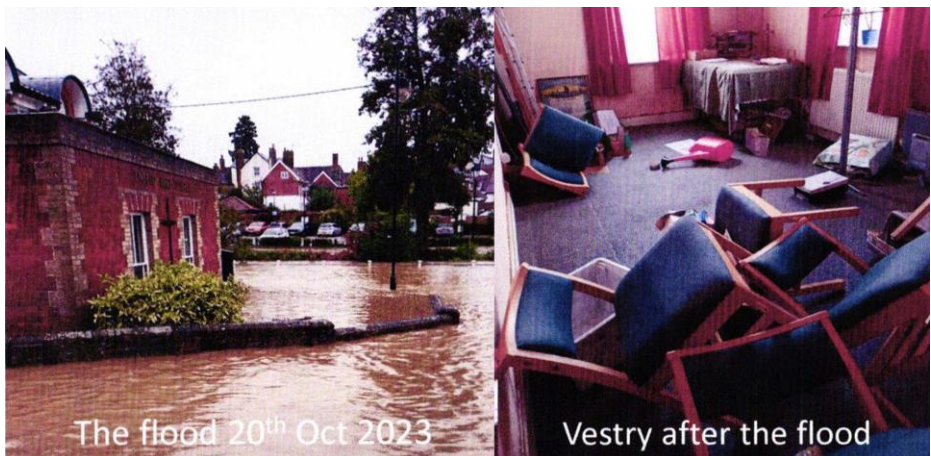
That takes an act of faith. That was the message that that baby gave his mother: you are totally free but you must think all the time of God's plan, God's will, as you did when the Angel Gabriel came to you and you said YES immediately. You have to suffer, you have to give your life even to death, but it will end in resurrection.

Let us thank God for this mysterious Christmas present of freedom on this Christmas Day.

(Placid Meylink, Christmas 1996)

FRAMLINGHAM UNITED FREE CHURCH (Joint Methodist and URC)

Our friends at Framlingham suffered in the floods of October.



REPORT FROM THE DECEMBER ELDERS' MEETING

The Elders were delighted to welcome Rev'd John Cook, our Interim Moderator, to the meeting. Nigel chaired the evening and led the devotions and prayers. As usual we prayed for those who are in special need of prayer at this time.

We were delighted to learn that Tom has installed a new computer for us to use in Church. Hopefully this should enable people to use the Powerpoint Slides that they have prepared at home. He has been able to install the original version of Easy Worship which is easier to use than the updated version. Thanks to Tom for all his hard work on this.

John explained that the Synod have asked him to be our Interim Moderator to support us during the vacancy. He is there to help and advise us and work especially to liaise between the Church and any prospective minister. He will advise on the Pastorate Profile. He also said this is the time for us to concentrate on the things that are going well. John is leading worship at Great Meeting on 14th January.

Hadleigh Christmas Event - Claire explained that the Nativity Scenes and the Church being open for this had been a huge amount of work. We need to make decisions about this much earlier in the year and enrol a band of volunteers. We also need to publicise it better so that the decorated Church is seen by more people. It worked well serving refreshments in the Church, alongside the displays and the children's activities. Those who came seemed to enjoy the warmth and welcome. We will discuss 2024 at the June Elders' Meeting but if you have ideas for the theme for Advent 2024, please do let us know.

We discussed where we should worship during January and February and pros and cons were considered. Claire explained that we have a long tradition of not worshipping in the Church in these months and it would give us the opportunity to be warmer, closer together and coffee could be served from that back too. It would also demonstrate that we are being careful citizens of the world's resources. The Elders decided to recommend to Church Meeting that we should use the Community Room. John suggested that we could use this time to declutter and spring clean the Church before returning to worship in March.

Claire Coster

FINANCE REPORT - NOVEMBER 2023

Total income in November was £2,978 and expenditure £7,424 giving a deficit of £4,446. Income from offerings was £1,588 and income from lettings was £323 (this does not include most of our regular November bookings as these had not been invoiced at the time of writing this report – these will show up on next month's report). We received £60 in donations towards the fellowship fund, bringing the total in that fund to £162.

Our total cash flow for this year up to the end of November is -£8,152. Offerings have decreased by around 15% on average this year compared with last (£1,957 monthly average in 2023 vs. £2,302 in 2022). This is most likely just a result in a general decrease in congregation size in recent times.

Gas costs have risen significantly since last year, as has been expected. Our income from lettings has more than covered this though, lettings income in 2023 is £20,666 to date, an increase of £2,434 compared with the same period last year. Our electricity contract has just renewed and we will be seeing an increase in electricity bills from now.

Our monthly Ministry and Mission payment to The URC in 2023 is £2,726. Other payments in August were the usual wages, utility bills and general expenses. Pulpit supply costs have obviously increased recently, a total of £568 over the last 6 months.

Now that our 2022 accounts have been signed off by the accountants and submitted to the charity commission, we have paid the charities that we chose to support in 2022 – a total of £2,960 split between Commitment for Life, FIND, Open Doors and Suffolk Mind.

Please remember to sign a gift aid form if you are able to and haven't already. This allows us to reclaim 25% from HMRC on any gift you make to the church or have made over the last four years. There should be forms at the back of the church or contact me directly and I will get a form to you.

Tom Gordon, Treasurer

DATES FOR 2024

As you fill in the special dates for 2024 on your calendar or in your diary, you might like to write these special dates in the life of our Church.

18th – 25th January Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

4th February Worship led by Rev'd Lythan Nevard, Moderator of Eastern Synod

14th February Ash Wednesday

10th March Mothering Sunday

17th March Church Meeting – 11:30 am in the Church

28th March Maundy Thursday Service – 7:30 pm

29th March Good Friday – 10:30 – Walk of Witness

2:00 pm – Meditation Service at the foot of the Cross

31st March Easter Day – Sun rise service and Morning Worship

9th June Worship led by Rev'd John Proctor, with shared lunch and Bible Study

7th July South Suffolk Area Partnership Service at Great Meeting at 4:00 pm with worship led by Rev'd Lythan Nevard and bring and share tea

22nd September Harvest Festival

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 111 | 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 Rev'd John Cook)

Serving Elders

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Chloe Elmer

Jan Dicks

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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.*

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