



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*

ANNUAL REPORTS 2024-2025

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Hadleigh United Reformed Church
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MINISTER'S REPORT TO HADLEIGH AGM, JUNE 2025

As we reflect on the past year, we give thanks for all that God has done in and through our church community.

Rev Adam Earle and I became your ministers on 1st January after Great Meeting had been without a minister since Bryn and family moved on in the middle of 2023.

You have joined the Ipswich and East Pastorate of the URC, meaning that you are now working with 4 other URCs in the East of Suffolk as we support each other in ministry.

Hadleigh URC continues to be a church rich in life, activity, and commitment. The Church's Annual General Meeting, especially through Claire's report allows us a glimpse into the variety of ways we have sought to serve God, one another, and our wider community over the past twelve months.

Though a smaller congregation than in the recent past, our strength lies in the dedication of those who participate in the various groups and activities that shape our church life. From Lent groups to social events and outreach initiatives, each group plays a vital role in nurturing faith, offering fellowship, and reaching beyond our walls. The dedication of volunteers, leaders, and participants has been inspiring, and we give thanks for their time, energy, and faithfulness.

Throughout the year, we have celebrated times of joy and walked together through moments of challenge. We have worshipped, prayed, and supported one another, trusting in God's presence and guidance. We have welcomed a few and said goodbye to a few more. As we look to the future, we do so with hope and a renewed sense of purpose, seeking to build on the strong foundations laid by those who have gone before us.

Adam and I see ministry in this church and surrounding community as a privilege. At the start of the year not only has Hadleigh joined Ipswich and East Pastorate but Adam and I exchanged Primary Contact Minister (PCM) roles. I am now the PCM for Leiston Saxmundham United Church (LSUC), Felixstowe URC and Hadleigh URC. Adam has become the PCM for St John's URC and Castle Hill URC. We swap

the Primary role roughly every 2 years bringing our different gifts and perceptions to the churches, though we both remain your ministers.

The reports and discussion at the AGM share stories of growth, moments of encouragement, times of challenge and reflections on the work yet to be done.

May it serve as a reminder that, in Christ, we are one body — each person valued and each contribution important. Together, we look forward to continuing to share God's love in our community and beyond.

David

Rev David Rees

SECRETARY'S REFLECTIONS

What a year it has been since our last Annual Church Meeting! So much has happened, life as an elder and church secretary has been challenging but at the heart of it has been God's love and faithfulness to us as we strive to 'provide family, celebrate diversity, serve the community through and for the love of Jesus Christ.'



The highlight of the year was on 1st January 2025 when we officially joined the Ipswich and East Pastorate. The service to welcome us to the Pastorate was held at our Church on 9th February and led by the Moderator of the Eastern Synod Rev'd Lythan Nevard. After 18 months of being in vacancy we were excited to join the group of four other churches with Rev'd David Rees and Rev'd Adam Earle as our ministers. We are very grateful to Rev'd John Cook who was our Interim Moderator and supported us during the vacancy in so many ways and helped prepare us for the next stage of the Church's life.



The lowest point of the year was on 19th August 2024 when I received a telephone call to say that there was a police raid happening at 23 Ann Beaumont Way (the manse) and the property had been used as a cannabis factory. The shock, damage to the property and ramifications of the insurance cover had an awful effect on the elders. We were not experienced in dealing with this sort of event. Poor John Cook was on holiday in Scotland, receiving a barrage of emails as we tried to deal with the immediate impact.

The long term effects has meant that we have needed to replace the roof felting and some of the roof struts which had been removed, the 160 plant pots removed, all the electrical paraphernalia removed, ceilings and walls upstairs repaired and the bedrooms redecorated, a new carpet on the landing and stairs, protracted emails with the energy suppliers, and no insurance payment because it was deemed to be 'malicious damage'. Now that we are part of the I&E Pastorate we no longer need a manse and so the March Church Meeting agreed that we could sell the property. At the moment the property is on the books of David Burr Estate Agents.

We were all very sad when Angela Lambert died in October 2024. Angela had not been at all well since her stroke but her relatively sudden death at such a young age was a shock for her family, friends and church family. As a Church family we tried to support Ric and Hannah, who lived at home, and the rest of the family as best we could.

Ric decided to move back to Hampshire to be closer to the rest of his children and left Suffolk in February 2025. Since his move, Jan and Tom have been covering the Administrator's job and we are very grateful to them for all the extra hard work and time that this has taken. A new Premises Coordinator has been appointed and we look forward to him taking on the role from June 2025.

We were delighted to welcome Elaine Malcolm into membership in July.

Robert Goh decided to move to Stamford in November 2024 and we have really missed Robert and all the things he contributed to life in the Church – arranging flowers and decorating windowsills, being a regular helper at the Maintenance Morning, switching the lights on



and off and being a door steward. We also lost two more of our church family friends – John Rose died in August and Doreen Beckett died in September. Both had been faithful members of our fellowship in their younger days and at their services we were able to give thanks for their witness and service to Jesus and the community. Our Church membership has reduced and is now recorded as 59.

During Lent 2025 we had the opportunity to visit the Churches in the I&E Pastorate for a service on a Sunday afternoon. Some of our congregation managed to visit four of the five churches and it was a wonderful opportunity to see the other churches, worship together and meet some of their members and others from the pastorate. Special thanks to Rev'ds David and Adam for leading these services.

As part of the pastorate, there is an Advisory Group Meeting on Zoom when two representatives from each church meeting with David and Adam. There is also a worship team meeting, again on Zoom, when representatives from each church meet to plan worship leaders for the pastorate. Special thanks to Michael Tillett who attends this on our behalf. Finally there is an eco group which Jan Dicks and Claire joined for the first time in May. All of the churches are working towards their silver eco church award.

During the year Chloe Elmer and Claire attended the General Assembly of the URC in July 2024 and have also attended the Eastern Synods in October and March. Chloe and George Elmer have attended Mental Health First Aid training, Chloe attended a Synod children and youth leaders' retreat, Karen Harman and Claire attended Intermediate Safeguarding Training.

We have continued to hold monthly elders' meetings and quarterly church meetings. We have also held one elders' away morning with plans for another at the end of June. Your elders have been kept busy and out of mischief!

We are now a much smaller team with Ric moving to Hampshire and Ann Swallow coming to the end of her term of service at the Annual Church Meeting. Thanks to Ric for all his work as an elder, printing the weekly news sheet and service sheets, operating the projector and leading prayers on a Wednesday. Thanks to Ann for all her work as an elder, particularly her visiting of so many people in our fellowship, arranging flowers so beautifully and organising the rota, and organising the distribution of the monthly newsletter and harvest gifts.

As from 9th June 2025 our leadership team will be Rev'd David Rees, Rev'd Adam Earle, Claire Coster, Nigel Crisp, Jan Dicks, Chloe Elmer and Paul Simon. When I first became an elder there was a team of thirteen, twelve elders and Bryn. Now the serving elders number just five. Please continue to pray regularly for the team especially as work on the Mission Action Plan and make recommendations to church meeting as to what we should be doing.

In Africa a traditional saying is that it takes a whole village to raise a child. In Hadleigh, it takes a whole church family to serve the local

community. Each individual is crucial to the work of Hadleigh United Reformed Church.

THANK YOU TO EACH AND EVERYONE OF YOU for all that you do for us.

May God continue to bless us as we worship, witness and work for God in this community.

Claire Coster

JUNIOR CHURCH

This has been a very quiet year for Junior Church.

The new set up in Church – with the children's table, books and activity on the left of the church has worked very well. We try to create interesting activity sheets regularly so that children attending worship have a variety of things to do. The flags and instruments are always available as well.



Ella Simon has been a true stalwart of Junior church, often bringing her friends in to join us in learning more about Jesus. We have been delighted to welcome Willow on several occasions and we always get excellent flag waving when Alex and Rowan are with us too! The children willingly give out things or collect things in our All Age interactive services when we encourage them to listen with us to films and music.

We still offer two Junior church sessions every month and welcome all children. It is lovely to have visitors who often join in with parents or grandparents.

Ella, Willow, Sheeba and Claire attended another Dougie Doug Doug Praise Party – this time at Sawston Free Church on 19th October when the theme was encountering wild animals in God's creation.

Topics covered in the last twelve months include a focus on understanding the Easter story and Christmas as well as taking care of our world with work about plants and flowers as well as litter picking to show we can be practical. We have also looked at the Bible, it's books and shape and the Lord's prayer.

The URC national website has some lovely resources which we are increasingly using to good effect.

Chloe Elmer once again ran an Easter Egg hunt on Easter Sunday and all the leaders worked together to lead Café church last autumn and will do so again in the summer.

Once again Chloe, Michelle, Hilary and Claire have worked imaginatively and patiently to help all the children to learn more about Jesus. They are determined to continue with this important part of mission and to them all we should say a heartfelt 'Thank You.'

Karen Harman and the Junior Church team.

REPORT ON WORSHIP



**“O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,
bow down before him, his glory proclaim;
with gold of obedience and incense of lowliness,
kneel and adore him the Lord is his name.**

**Low at his feet lay your burden of carefulness,
high on his heart he will bear it for you,
comfort your sorrows and answer your prayerfulness,
guiding your steps in the way that is true.**

**Fear not to enter his courts in the slenderness
of the poor wealth you would count as your own;
truth in its beauty and love in its tenderness
these are the offerings to bring to his throne.”**

Dear All,

These are beautiful words on worship which take us to the very heart of what worship should be. I hope that looking back over the last 12 months you have felt that all that has been done in worship has moved us in this direction.

The AGM is a time to say thank you. We have many people to thank once again this year. Our visiting worship leaders Revds. Lythan Nevard, John Cook, and Jim Dalglish. Also we have begun to get to know Adam and David as they begin their ministry amongst us.

We say thank you to folk from our own fellowship who have again given time and effort to prepare and lead worship – Revd. Janice White, Revd. Canon David Atkins, Nigel Crisp, Ronnie Howson, Karen Harman, Claire Coster, Paul Simon, Chloe and George Elmer. Thanks too for George Barnes, Ric Lambert, Jan Dicks. WE said our farewell to Ric as he returned to the South Coast after the sad death of Angela. Please do hold him in your prayers.

Thanks too for our Music and technology experts Jane Tillett and Tom Gordon. (See Jane's report for further info)

For those who Sunday by Sunday staff the Power Point projector.

To those who read and intercede so faithfully Sunday by Sunday.

A vacancy can be a challenging time, but I feel in many ways we have been blessed by it too. We have learnt to work collaboratively and humbly with each other and encouragement has come from many directions. It is my sincere and optimistic hope that what we have learnt about teamwork can be carried into the new journey with the Ipswich and East Pastorate.



We have aimed for both richness and diversity in our music. Café Church has continued to be successful and more reflective services have also been a part of our diet too. Christmas was celebrated with familiar favorites like the Carol Service, the Christingle service has re-emerged and we introduced a short Carols for Christmas Eve service.



At Easter we washed feet, sat at the foot of the Cross and on Easter Day we praised our Risen Saviour joyously as we broke bread together and proclaimed Jesus Christ is Risen! Alleluia!

Looking ahead.... We await with expectation what God has planned for us next. So please continue to pray for all who are involved in worship – for David and Adam and all the team here.

May God's Blessing, Father Son and Holy Spirit continue to be with us all.

Michael Tillet

MUSIC AND TECHNOLOGY MATTERS

This year we have continued to provide a range of music styles, ranging from traditional to 'older modern' to some newer material. Thank you for your support and encouragement to develop music – an important aspect of our worship.



There are now a range of resources to use when I am not able to play and Rev'd David Rees has added to these.



Thanks to Tom Gordon for his technical expertise and input and to all who 'drive' the computer each Sunday, to help make our worship run smoothly. Tom has offered to provide further technical training, so if you need a refresher or are new to tech and can offer help, watch out for details.

Our YouTube channel appear to be viewed regularly and is an important part of our outreach. Sometimes our services are watched live, but often throughout the week.

Chloe, Paul and I have continued to maintain our Facebook Page, advertising services and events and also celebrating what has happened in the church and community. I can't claim to understand how the algorithms work, but they suggest that the pages are viewed frequently and we pray for a positive impact.

We don't yet have an Instagram page and I am not especially competent with this form of social media. If there is anybody who is and would like to copy the entries on our Face Book page to an Instagram account, please have a word with me.

I try to keep our noticeboards up to date – advertising services and other events. If you are organising a church based or charity event and send me the details in good time, I will do my best to advertise it on social media and our noticeboards.

Jane Tillet

WEDNESDAY PRAYERS

A group of between six and fourteen people meet weekly on a Wednesday in the prayer corner of the Church at half past ten, with the prayer time usually finished by 11am.

The time together usually consists of a Bible reading, a reflection on the passage or a talk based on whatever is on the leader's heart that week and then a time for prayer. In our blue folder there is a list of people who have requested prayer and these people are often named individually and remembered before God. We also pray for the staff and residents in the care homes in Hadleigh and especially members of our Church. Streets of the town which are the focus of Churches Together in Hadleigh are prayed for and also local, national and international situations may be remembered in prayer.

It may include singing a hymn, listening to a song or poem or an open prayer time. Variety is definitely a special dimension to our service.

On the second Wednesday of the month, there is the opportunity to receive healing prayer.

There are refreshments following prayers on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month.

We are delighted that Revd David is able to lead the group on the first Wednesday of alternate months and there are seven others who take it in turns to lead.

Grateful thanks to all those who prepare and lead and also to those who serve refreshments.

It is good to meet and pray together and all are welcome to join us.

If you are in special need of prayer or know someone who does, and you have their permission, please do add their name to the prayer requests sheet.

Claire

MONKS ELEIGH CHAPEL

As I am the only member of the Chapel and responsibilities at Hadleigh URC were stretched, it has not been possible to hold many events during the past year.



On Thursday 19 December at 2pm there was an Afternoon Tea & Carol Singing to support Samara's Aid working in war torn Syria. The organ was played by Andrea King and 9 people attended.

I did a display about Samara's Aid and shared news and video recordings of the work being done. £125 was raised which was sent to Samara's Aid and we had a very grateful acknowledgement.

On Thursday 15 May this year a Service was led by Revd. Andy Jowitt, Engagement Officer at Foxearth Meadows Nature Reserve, who spoke about "Genesis to Revelation: God, Us and the Planet". He shared many scriptures from Genesis to Revelation that show that caring for God's creation should be part of every Christian's life. £45 was donated to the management of Foxearth Meadows.

H.O.M.E - Heart of Monks Eleigh Day Retreat Centre – Sadly there have only been a couple of bookings during the past year.

Blessings

Maureen Morris

BLYTHSWOOD SHOE BOX APPEAL

Our outreach project of supporting Blythswood Care to take gift filled shoe boxes and shoe bags to those living in difficult conditions in the areas of Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Kosovo, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and the Ukraine, resulted in completing 136 filled boxes and bags, which were taken to Kosovo in time for Christmas 2024.

Throughout the year we are busy collecting items. People are kindly buying toiletries, stationary items, toys etc. knitters are providing warm, cosy colourful, hats, gloves and scarves. Machinists are running up shoe bags and toiletry bags. It's a real team effort from many people outside of church as well as within.

We are grateful to Morrisons who have also helped us to be successful in completing the suggested contents of the boxes and bags, by providing us with extra essentials. Many thanks too, to those who generously gave money to help buy goods and to help towards covering the costs of transport. Unfortunately, our fundraising efforts do not go quite far enough, so your support makes all the difference in achieving this outreach to folk in need.

Our 2024 fundraiser, shared with Street Child was held on June 1st, an afternoon tea with various stalls in the Ansell Centre, with keyboard accompaniment. £332 was raised – what an amazing achievement! The total was divided between the two charities, giving the Blythswood SHOE BOX Appeal £166.



We had several filling sessions to give people a variety of options to come along and help.

The boxes and bags were blessed by Rev David Rees, during our service on 27th October, ready for collection the following day!!

We have already had a January workshop this year preparing items ready to pop into the boxes and bags. A new fundraising venture of a table top sale with refreshments has been arranged for June 7th.

A new idea for our filling sessions is to have 4 consecutive days from September 25th – 28th, which should make the task of bringing items up and down the stairs much easier.

Thank you for reaching out, loving and enriching others' lives. Let's thank God for the work made possible through the generosity of supporters.

Hilary Crisp

HADLEIGH STORYTELLERS

Taking bible stories to our local primary school children in drama form.

We are a group of eight enthusiastic volunteers from St Joseph's, St Mary's and the URC.

Our first Bible drama story was told in July 2015, under the guidance of The Bible Society, with their 'Open The Book' scheme.

In January 2024 we began working independently under the umbrella of 'Churches Together in Hadleigh'. This is proving to be very successful, because we can accommodate values and goals of the schools, at the appropriate time, to fit in with the children's planned learning. Our Team are being creative in not just their drama skills but in writing stories too.

We currently visit St Mary's CEVA Primary School and Hadleigh Community Primary School on the second Friday of the month, finishing each session with a time of reflection, prayer and biblical song, accompanied by our guitarist.

At Easter this year we took the story of 'The Remembering Meal', not only into the schools, but also into the residential home of Sydney Brown Court. The Remembering Meal is a powerful story of the last supper, a dialogue of the living past between a grandmother & her granddaughter as they set the dinner table. We have been eagerly asked to return.

Congratulations and many thanks to our Team members, past and present, for a decade of storytelling.

I pray that the seeds we have sown are fruitful.

Hilary Crisp

STREET CHILD
Once upon a time International Christian Relief, renamed Build Africa.

This charity has been supported by our church children over many years, from at least 1981. The children wanted to reach out to help other children less fortunate than themselves. International Christian Relief was chosen, helping with education, health and hygiene and providing skills for living and lifting children out of poverty. The charities name was changed to Build Africa in 2007. It was amalgamated with Street Child, a larger charity in 2021.

To raise funds for Street Child a joint afternoon tea, with a lovely assortment of home bakes and various stalls was held on June 1st last year, 2024, with our Blythswood Care shoe box fundraiser. Our friend Brian, from St Mary's Church and also one of our Hadleigh Storytellers Team, added to the atmosphere with his keyboard playing and singing. An amazing total of £322 was raised and shared between the two charities – £166 each. Some odd coin collections had been given to me during the year by church members, which brought the total donated for Street Child to £180.

Thoughts of changing to a smaller charity, hopefully resulting in meaning our fundraising could have more impact, was put to our annual church meeting in 2024.

One that sprung to mind was Samara's Aid, which was in great need, already known by Maureen Morris our Monks Eleigh member. 'Samara's Aid' had snowballed into providing medical and humanitarian aid focused in Syria. It began in 2014, by Samara Levy a young Christian mother compelled to gather as much winter clothing as possible to send to people displaced due to war, living in freezing conditions after running terrified from their homes with only the clothes on their backs. Maureen has supported Samara's Aid charity since 2016.

Church meeting agreed to this change and we have been fundraising. We have held two soup lunches after church raising £300 on November 17th and held another on February 23rd 2025 raising nearly £200.

Maureen gives us regular informative updates in our monthly church newsletters. We have also purchased Samara Levy's book, 'Rebuilding the Ruins' telling her story and experiences and also bought a copy of 'Up from the Ashes' written by Dr A. He is an amazing Syrian doctor deeply involved and dedicated with helping the charity.

The two books are being passed around in church, they are both incredible testimonies of God's faithfulness and provision in a hurting and broken world.

Our next fundraiser will be an afternoon tea at Maureen's nature reserve in Monks Eleigh on 19th July 2025.

Hilary Crisp

BRING A PARABLE

This group has eight participants, meeting in members' homes on the first Thursday of each month at 7.00pm. Each meeting lasts one hour.

We have been meeting now for over a year with reasonably consistent attendance. We take it in turns to lead and host when possible. We start and end with prayer.

The choice of parable is up to the leader and the Bible reference is usually posted well in advance. The leader gives a brief introduction which often includes some questions to get discussion started.

Although the parables of Jesus have been the core subject matter of our discussions, parables from the Hebrew Scriptures have also featured as well as a troubling miracle/parable from Jesus' ministry and a whole book parable from the Hebrew writings. I wonder if you can guess which book?

If you would like to join us, we can squeeze you in. A fresh point of view is very welcome.

Please let Jan or Paul know if you would like to be part of the group.

Wendy Atkins

ANSELL CENTRE CHARITY (ACC)

The ACC continues to run the two lunch clubs, the Memories Café and the digital cinema. Each event attracts a good number of participants, and the trustees feel they are fulfilling their original aim which is to provide community events for the people of Hadleigh and surrounding villages and to work with the URC to maintain the Ansell Centre.

During the past year we have completed the redecoration of the quiet room thanks to a generous donation. A new carpet, comfortable seating and new curtains have been purchased. Do take a look at the room next time you are in the Ansell Centre. We are very pleased with its ambience and hope it will provide a quiet space for those who need it, as well as being useful for small meetings and groups such as Citizens Advice Bureau.

In May 2025 we celebrated 20 years since the Ansell Centre Charity was first set up. Before the charity was formed, a monthly lunch club had started to meet in the building which was then known as the "URC School Hall". The lunch club was started by Frank and Mary Cross and Joyce Willis. It still continues today and is known as the "First Lunch Club". The anniversary event was held on 20th May and over 70 people attended. Every one of them had helped the ACC in some way, whether as volunteer, funding provider, financial donor or advice giver.

Sarah, the lovely Memories Café cook, baked the scones and an anniversary cake.

We are very fortunate to have a wonderful team of volunteers who help run all our activities. Without them, our events could not take place. The help and support they give to the trustees mean that each event is the great success that it is.

We hope that we will be able to continue to serve the community of Hadleigh and surrounding villages for many years to come.

Eve McCloid , Jan Dicks, Janice White, John Cunningham and Karen Harman (ACC trustees and church members/adherents)

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN HADLEIGH (CTiH)

Rev David Rees, Claire Coster and Barbara Robinson have been attending the CTiH meetings with me this year.

Several events have been organised including two well-attended Taizé services at St Joseph's RC Church.

In January, CTiH took part in the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Members of each church were invited to take part in regular weekday services in the churches of each denomination. We, at the URC, held our weekly morning prayer service on Tuesday instead of the normal Wednesday so that everyone could attend Mass at St Jo's on the Wednesday. St Mary's service was the regular Café Church on the Friday morning. It was good to get together with other Christians and worship in different ways.

During Lent, discussion groups were organised using the book "The Things He Carried; A Journey to the Cross; Meditations for Lent and Holy Week" by Stephen Cottrell. We met on Tuesday evenings alternately at the Salvation Army and URC and on Thursday afternoons at St Mary's. The groups were well attended by people from all the Hadleigh churches. The material was very thought-provoking as it considered Christ's journey to the cross without glossing over difficult details.

On Good Friday, the Walk of Witness was held starting at Morrison's and ending at the URC where David Atkins had held a reflective service for those not able to walk. The morning ended with coffee and hot cross buns served in the Ansell Centre.

As well as these joint events, regular services are held at some of the Hadleigh Care Homes taken by members of the different churches. Also, a list of all the streets of Hadleigh is compiled by Barbara so that every road is prayed for during the year.

One of the most successful initiatives undertaken by CTiH is "Hadleigh Story Tellers". This wonderful group of people from St Mary's, St Jo's and the URC regularly go into primary schools to tell Bible Stories in an engaging way to the children.

I hope that all the churches in Hadleigh can continue to work together during the coming year fulfilling the aim of Churches Together in England – One in Christ Jesus, engaged in God's mission, empowered by the spirit.

Jan

ECO-CHURCH

Eco-Church is an award scheme developed by A Rocha UK for churches who want to demonstrate that they care for God's earth. As reported last year, during 2023 – 24 we managed to achieve our Bronze Award and we now have the certificate on display in the Ansell Centre and Community Room. We are now beginning to work towards the Silver Award.

It is lovely that all the other churches in the Ipswich and East Pastorate have also achieved Bronze Awards and we can now work together to help each other as we progress towards the Silver Award.

Twice a year all the churches in the Pastorate hold Eco-services. On Sunday 27th April, Claire and I led the Café church service which had been prepared by Rev'd Adam Earle for all the churches in the Pastorate. The theme was "Food for Thought". Members of the congregation were asked to commit to an action they would take which

would benefit those who produce our food and/or the environment. Holding Eco-services and church members committing to taking action to help stop climate change are both ways which will help us to achieve our Silver Award.

Responding to climate change is an essential part of our responsibility to safeguard God's creation, not only for those who are being unfairly affected today but also for future generations.

Jan Dicks

LETTINGS

Lettings continue to be an important part of our outreach as a church as well as bringing in much needed income.

Our wonderfully versatile buildings allow us to welcome a wide variety of different groups from Majorettes to the Choral Society and from Wood Turners to Flower Arrangers. In all there are approximately 25 regular groups who use our premises as well as a large number of casual users organising such events as parties, coffee mornings and quizzes.

This year we have unfortunately lost the Food Bank which used to operate out of one of the small rooms in the Ansell Centre, but we have gained two new groups – chair yoga and Hadleigh Elderly People's Welfare Committee.

Ric Lambert, our administrator, moved back to Southampton in February following the untimely death of his wife, Angela. Since then, I have been managing the bookings again and Tom has been organising the invoices but I am pleased to report that a "premises co-ordinator" will be starting work in the near future.

It will be good to have the church open again regularly for payment of invoices and picking up keys.

Jan

PASTORAL TEAM

Pastoral care continues to be at the heart of our church life and happens in many ways. It can range from a chat, sending a card, a visit, a phone call, taking a meal, praying for the person, meeting for a coffee ...

Informal conversations before and after worship, conversations during activities that meet on our premises, telephone calls, emails and What's App messages all help us keep in touch with each other and share our joys and concerns. As a church family we have responsibilities for each other, and we are very fortunate that we have a family that loves and cares in so many different ways.

More formal pastoral care happens when a visit is made and usually includes a time of prayer for the person who has received the visit. Members of the pastoral team have responsibility for a group of people and try to ensure that the people in their group receive the care they need. Revd Janice White and Michael Tillett have also taken Holy Communion to those who are housebound and no longer able to attend Church.

Rev'd David and Rev'd Adam and the elders are also responsible for the pastoral care of the church family. Both Elders' and Church Meetings include pastoral care as part of their agenda and after news of people has been shared (without betraying any confidences) prayer is always offered. If you have a particular concern or need, please contact David, Adam or Claire for support.

The Pastoral Team has met a couple of times this year and the Pastoral Core Team has met with Revd David to review the pastoral groups and also the membership list. Now that we are part of the Ipswich and East Pastorate, we aim for the pastoral team to meet at least once every half term.

THANK YOU to everyone for caring for each other.

John 15: 12 (Jesus said) 'My commandment is this: love one another, just as I love you.'

Claire Coster - Pastoral Team Convenor

MANAGEMENT REPORT

1. The Management Group (MG) is responsible for all the buildings and gardens of the church. Viz. the church, the Ansell Centre, all the gardens, the Manse, support of the eldership in matters of security and safety, Monks Eleigh HOME Retreat and Chapel.



2. NOTE We are in need of people to join the team. We meet around 4 or 5 times per year. Do let me know if you believe you can join our numbers. The notes below give an idea of our responsibilities.

3. General

We had to suspend all but the most urgent works following the criminal use of our manse. Nigel has been liaising with the authorities and our insurance company regarding us recouping the costs of repairs. Once all that is complete, I will know how much money will be available to us to be able to recommence our works. But we have been able to keep the place tidy and make improvements such as implementing better lighting. We are planning to shampoo the church carpet, depending on funding.

4. Premises Coordinator's (formerly Administrator) Office.
 - a) The Synod Property met us just before Christmas to look at our plans for the new office. They made some helpful suggestions.
 - b) We have decided to use the former FIND room in the AC as a temporary office.
 - c) Mervyn keeps a watchful eye on our Heating and Lighting (H&L) consumption, maintaining a regular record of our usage, and liaising with our suppliers when necessary.

5. Church Buildings and Rooms

- a) Re-plastering the damaged Upper Community Room and Vestry. See item 3 above.
- b) Front Door repair and re-decoration – completed
- c) We are planning to shampoo the church carpet. A considerable undertaking.
- d) The Synod Property Committee visited us just before Christmas to consider our plans for the Premises Coordinator (see above 3a). They were most supporting and made several suggestions which included enlarging the vestibule in addition to the proposed office.
- e) We are planning to decorate the former minister's vestry and the Upper Community Room when the plaster has been repaired.

6. Ansell Centre

- a) The Quiet room – completed
- b) The middle room floor – the floor needs to be repaired and re sanded.
- c) The plinth heaters in the kitchen have been replaced.
- d) There has been an infestation of rats in the former FIND office. Appropriate action has been taken, so hopefully we are free of them.

7. Grounds

- a) There has been some vandalism in and around the sensory garden. All repairs effected.
- b) Two new benches have been installed in the grounds.

8. Manse

The Eldership, under the guidance of Nigel and Claire, assumed direct responsibility for the restoration of the manse following the damage caused by its criminal use as a cannabis farm by our tenant.

9. Security and Safety

- a) Security Cameras. Tom has been in the process of completing this.
- b) Dave Coster has continued to conduct the PAT testing. George conducts the monthly emergency lighting testing.
- c) We need your cooperation to keep our premises tidy and clear of unwanted trailing leads and unnecessary storage.

- d) Keep the fire extinguishers and other similar equipment up to date,

10. Monks Eleigh

We share responsibility for repairs and maintenance with the Trustees of the John Ansell Trust.

11. Saturday Morning Maintenance

- a) We (all of the church, the ACC and anyone else from the Town and surrounding areas.). Do join us some time and have a look around and see what you can do for your church
- b) Safety checks - PAT testing etc
- c) Minor repairs and decorations
- d) Gardening maintenance
- e) Sensory garden maintenance.
- f) Keep the place clean and tidy
- g) Clean and maintain the kitchen and equipment
- h) Keep the water softener in good order

Ronnie Howson - Chair of the Management Committee

TEA BREAK TEAM



FINANCE REPORT SUMMARY FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

We opened the year with a total of £45,009 and ended the year with £40,650.

Our major payments were £31,836 to Ministry and Mission, £10,718 on administrator and cleaner wages, £5,669 on buildings maintenance (excluding Manse), £10,644 on gas and electricity and £6,118 on insurance.

We also spent £13,221 (up to the end of 2024) on repairs to the Manse after the criminal damage which occurred. Manse rental income came to £12,036 and we also received £4,000 from the insurance company, 'as an interim gesture of good will'.

The rest of our income mainly consisted of £22,899 offering plus £3,440 refund from Gift Aid, £25,360 from lettings and £11,496 from the School House rent.

The Fellowship Fund continued in 2024 to help support anyone in our fellowship who runs into financial difficulties. We ended the year with £212 in this fund.

It should be noted that the operation of the church's finances is very much a team effort. In particular, George looks after incoming payments such as banking the weekly offering, Sammy looks after outgoing payments and Mervyn looks after all our energy contracts. Ronnie and Nigel have also been a great help with all sorts behind the scenes and I am very grateful to all of them for their constant hard work.

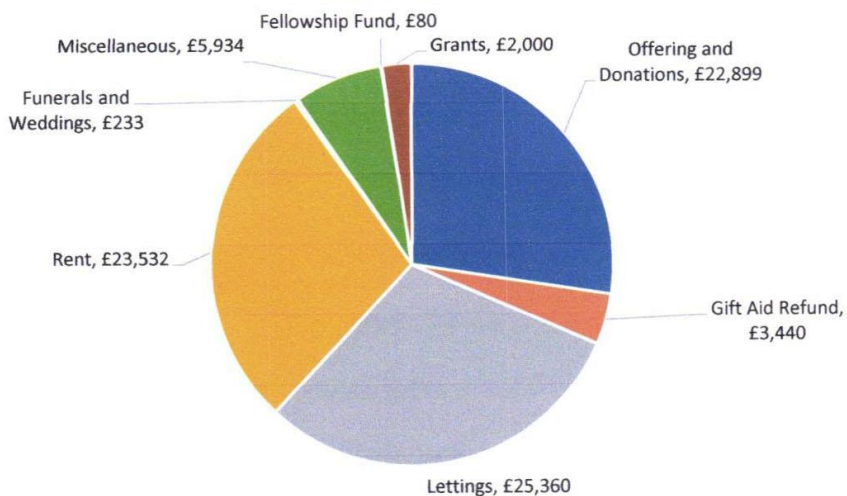
The following tables and graphs show a summary of income and expenditure for 2024.

Tom Gordon

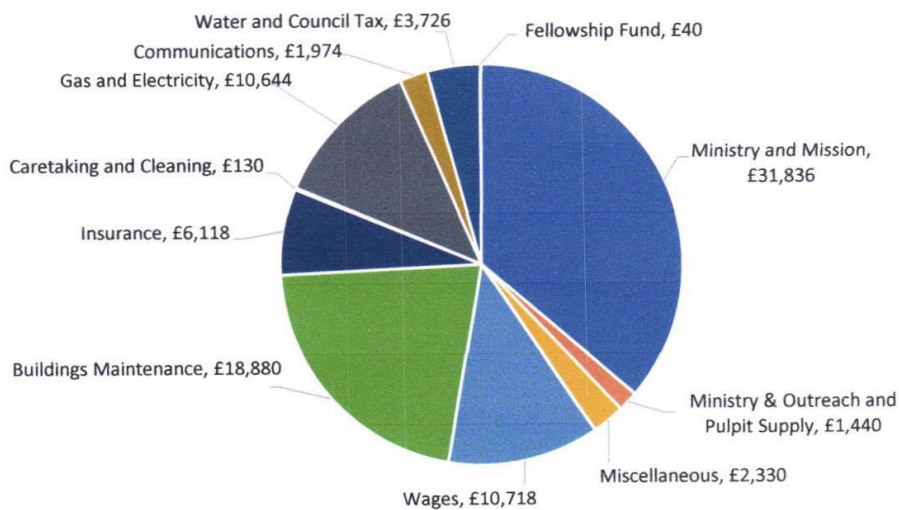
	2024			2023		
	Restricted	Unrestricted	Totals	Restricted	Unrestricted	Totals
INCOME						
Offering and Donations		£22,899	£22,899		£26,222	£26,222
Gift Aid Refund		£3,440	£3,440		£5,084	£5,084
Lettings		£25,360	£25,360		£24,563	£24,563
Rent		£23,532	£23,532		£17,250	£17,250
Funerals and Weddings		£233	£233		£330	£330
Miscellaneous		£5,934	£5,934		£1,018	£1,018
Fellowship Fund		£80	£80		£335	£335
Grants		£2,000	£2,000		£-	£-
TOTAL INCOME		£83,478	£83,478		£74,802	£74,802
EXPENDITURE						
Ministry and Mission		£31,836	£31,836		£32,088	£32,088
Pulpit Supply		£905	£905		£628	£628
Ministry & Outreach		£535	£535		£1,372	£1,372
Charities		£-	£-		£2,400	£2,400
Miscellaneous		£2,330	£2,330		£4,411	£4,411
Wages		£10,718	£10,718		£10,364	£10,364
Buildings Maintenance (Excluding Manse)		£5,669	£5,669		£4,396	£4,396
Buildings Maintenance, Manse		£13,211	£13,211		£1,050	£1,050
Insurance		£6,118	£6,118		£5,728	£5,728
Caretaking and Cleaning		£130	£130		£246	£246
Gas and Electricity		£10,644	£10,644		£8,590	£8,590
Communications		£1,974	£1,974		£1,802	£1,802
Water and Council Tax (Including Manse)		£3,726	£3,726		£3,817	£3,817
Fellowship Fund		£40	£40		£530	£530
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		£87,838	£87,838		£77,422	£77,422
CASH FLOW		-£4,359	-£4,359		-£2,621	-£2,621

	2024			2023		
	Opening Balance	Cash Flow	Closing Balance	Opening Balance	Cash Flow	Closing Balance
Current Account	£23,609	-£11,791	£11,818	£26,988	-£3,379	£23,609
Savings Account	£14,882	£3,233	£18,115	£14,741	£141	£14,882
Creditors Payable	-£506	£506	£-	-£700	£194	-£506
Debtors (Unpaid Invoices)	£7,024	£3,694	£10,718	£2083	£4,941	£7,024
Total	£45,009	-£4,359	£40,650	£43,112	-£2,621	£40,491

2024 Income



2024 Expenditure



THANK YOU

Thank you for all your contributions to life at Great Meetings and particular thanks to Chloe and Jane for the photographs.

RATS

Rats in the Ansell Centre

They gnawed through the water pipe
that's 5mm of lead
and made holes in the floor.



'Rats' in our Manse

Cut big holes in the ceilings
Installed water butts on the landing
Pitted the walls
Compost pots, pipes, cables and fans
everywhere
What a mess 'rats' leave!



Rats, we love them all.

Rat Manager

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

Rev'd David Rees	01473 402 721
Rev'd Adam Earle	01473 411316

Serving Elders

Claire Coster (Church Secretary)	01473 822850
Nigel Crisp	01473 822208
Chloe Elmer	
Jan Dicks	01473 823413
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

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Room Bookings - Hadleigh

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Room Bookings - Monks Eleigh

Ronnie Howson 01473 310169

Newsletter Editor

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