



WITHAM URC CHURCH MAGAZINE

March 2023

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

Pastoral Letter

Dear Friends,

On this beautiful sunny day, as I write this pastoral letter, it's a pleasure to see so many signs of new life in the garden and the hedgerow. Each season has its different merits but I always find spring incredibly uplifting. There's the warmer weather, the lighter evenings and most importantly for me, the transformation in nature: bare gardens transformed into a blazing riot of colour, bulbs making their appearance, barren trees with new leaves unfurling and buds that blossom, not to mention awakening to the sound of birds heralding it all.

I've been thinking about new life a lot recently because it has been such a privilege to hear about lives that have been touched by the love of Jesus and that have changed substantially as a result.

It is even more exciting to **see** the changes, people's demeanour changing as they receive and experience peace and joy.

Transforming lives is what God does. Transformed lives are the hallmark of the Holy Spirit.

Moses met with God 'face to face' and when he returned his face was transformed in that it shone so brightly, radiating the glory of God, that he had to put a veil over his face otherwise no one could look at him. Gradually, away from God's presence the brightness faded.

It's a bit like that with us. We have the opportunity to speak to God personally, to come into his glorious presence and this means we 'can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord - who is the Spirit - makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.' (2 Corinthians 3:18)

If we are tired, often it shows in our face; if we are weighed down, worried by burdens, that too shows in our face. Equally when we know the risen Lord, and he lives in us, when we have his presence within us, that shows in our face. We radiate peace which can be an elusive commodity for others; we radiate love, joy and hope all of which we get from Jesus by his Spirit within us when we spend time with him.

As we are transformed by the Holy Spirit, others will be also. Romans 12:2 tells us:

‘Don’t copy the behaviour and customs of this world but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you which is good, perfect and pleasing.’

There’s a lot of anxiety, despair and anger in our world, in our community. Peace, grace, joy and hope seem to be in short supply but when we know he who is the source of joy, hope and peace, we have an endless supply to pass on to others.

So let’s drink from the source of living water which brings joy, peace and hope and let it flow out to others so not only are our lives transformed but our community too.

This Lent may our Lord Jesus bless you as you seek to be an agent for transformation for others.

With much love,

Lorna

A visit to South Africa - Philip and Denise Vinton

A very special trip to see our daughter and her husband who have made the decision to continue to live in Jeffreys Bay with their six dogs. Jeffreys Bay is a town but it is like living in a village. It is well known in the surfing community and hosts one of the largest surfing competitions each year. Our son in law is a surfer and of course is in his element. The community are unbelievably friendly and approachable and after our short stay we had met and chatted to many residents and those passing through. There is concern that SA is not safe but fortunately in this small enclave we experienced no problems even though we did not go walking out at night which is a sensible thing to do even in the UK according to where you live.

The countryside is spectacular and vast and has so much potential but corruption in high places is a real problem and holding advancement back. Even so the main roads were well maintained and free from litter (unlike our local A12). Fresh fruit and veg in abundance in the supermarkets which had not been travelling for days or weeks and tasted so much better.

We had the pleasure of staying a couple of nights on a Game Reserve which was amazing seeing the animals so close in their natural environment. Photos cannot even capture the experience.

Denise was really looking forward to working at the local JBay Recycling Project which her daughter is involved in. They have a site adjacent to one of the townships and encourage the children to collect recycling materials which they bring to the Centre where it is weighed and they are given points called Mula which they can then spend on the variety of items available ranging from food, toys, school equipment and clothes, all of which has been donated. Other than the food items the goods are either pre-loved or new due to the generosity of the local businesses. I quote from a paragraph on their Facebook page:-

“The benefits from this Project are numerous. It cleans up the environment, empowers the kids to get what they need by using what is available, teaches them to look at rubbish in a different way, the value of

recycling, shopping and counting skills and deliver much needed support in a value for value concept rather than old-fashioned hand-outs.”

Denise had the pleasure of seeing some of the clothing items we had taken over being chosen. We had packed our two cases to the max and then stuffed a backpack with knitted hats as we had run out of room. These will be used come the winter and we are hoping to see some photographs of some very colourful heads.

There could be up to 250 children each week ranging from 3 years upwards. All the children receive some free food – the favourite apparently is hot dogs and can include a small carton of milk and fruit. It really depends on what is available. One week we made peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to hand out together with some other goodies.

The Project has just ran a Valentines Day fund raiser to get school uniforms for the girls which are extremely expensive when the families are on such low incomes. In this respect social media is a great asset and the money came via a sponsor who lived in Canada but had worked on the Project some time ago. Our daughter is now looking at approaching companies to acquire football boots, shins guards and socks, football being one of the children’s favourite past-times and for various restaurants/ companies to commit to providing food items on a regular basis once every month which would cut costs,

There is a Facebook Page and information on Instagram - [jbayrecyclingproject](#). Have a look for yourself.

All donations go directly to the Project to pay the rent for the building they use and purchase some items and food to pass on to the children. The cost of providing free food on the day for all the children is equivalent to £50 each week. If food is not used it is taken to the local orphanage so nothing is wasted.

We could talk no end about the Project and would be more than willing to chat to anyone interested.



**CHOOSE THE WORLD
YOU WANT**



FAIRTRADE

Join us for our
Fairtrade Fortnight
PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Sunday 5th March
Witham URC 9:30am

Choice of Fairtrade toppings:
Banana, Chocolate Spread or Honey

**FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT
21 FEBRUARY – 6 MARCH**



FAIRTRADE



Holdfast Credit Union - Naomi Claxton

Holdfast Summer Holidays Savings Account

“Pleasure is found first in anticipation, later in memory” ~ Julian Barnes

I am fortunate enough to have some very happy memories of spending a week last August in the Lake District, in a little cottage that overlooked a steam railway line, not far from Beatrix Potter’s House. I had never been that far north before and found the scenery breathtakingly beautiful. At the time, I was a stay-at-home Mum with no income of my own, and while my husband was supporting us, I really wanted to contribute towards our holiday myself.

I did this by switching on a feature with my online housekeeping bank account that rounded up transactions I paid for with my debit card and put the change into a savings account. I saved £200 over several months by doing this, and it felt nice to be able to pay for some meals and activities while we were away.

We loved it so much that we are returning to Damson Cottage again this summer, and now that I am working, I am planning to pay for the entire holiday from my earnings. As an existing member of the Holdfast Credit Union, it took me only minutes to set up a new savings account just for my holiday funds. For a new member, the process is still very quick and easy.

I’ve set up a regular payment so that the day after I get paid, a set amount gets put straight into my Holdfast Summer Holiday savings account. By the time we go away, I will have been able to pay for the rent of our cottage, and have extra to take away as spending money.

One big advantage for me with saving in a Holdfast account is that because it does not have a debit card with it, it makes it a lot harder to ‘just borrow a bit’ from my savings; at the same time I have the peace of mind that if I need to access my savings for an emergency, it is easy to do.

If the spring sunshine is making you think ahead to the summer holidays and perhaps a getaway of your own, come up and see us in the office, or send us an email, and we can set you up with a summer holidays savings account too.

Even if you are not planning a holiday, a Summer Holidays Savings account can still be useful - particularly if you are a parent with children who will be home from school. Extra childcare costs, days out, ice creams, perhaps a trip or two to the cinema...it can really add up.

We have some savers who put a little by throughout the year so that when August comes and the schools break up, they have the financial flexibility and freedom to enjoy the summer rather than find it stressful. If you receive child benefit, we can help you arrange to have it paid directly to us instead. We will take out the amount you would like us to and put it into your savings, and pay the rest into your bank account – all on the same day.

Keep an eye on our Facebook page and Instagram feeds closer to summer, where we will be sharing ideas for cheap or free activities, and how to make your money go further.

“Anticipating pain is like enduring it twice. Why not anticipate pleasure instead?” ~ Robin Hobb

Holdfast is here to help you save for and anticipate the pleasure of a happy summer ahead.

Afternoon Tea

Monday March 6th

at 2.30pm

Sandwiches,

Scones with Tiptree jam & cream

Home-made Cakes

£6.00

*Please let the office know
if you would like to come*

01376 500958



Thank you to all the contributors to the magazine.

**Articles for the April Magazine
to be with Bob and Jo Stibbards
by 27th March please to bjstibbards@gmail.com**

Favourite Bible Verses - Shirley Ratnage

I am sure, like me you have verses in the Bible which are special to you for various reasons. One that always lifts my spirit is Isaiah 40 v31: But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint.

I've always loved to watch the birds soar in the air and ride on the currents. How marvellous that would be!. As a primary school child I was convinced that I could fly. I told my brother this and promptly demonstrated by leaping off the top stair of our staircase, only to crash into the wall at the bottom. The neighbour came rushing round to see what was going on (Mum was out at work). Only my pride was hurt but I never tried it again.

In my late teens I was able to have a go at gliding. It was wonderful, floating above the landscape, absolutely silent and not a care in the world (I was just the passenger!). I was not so keen, however, on helping to drag the glider back to the starting point after landing to allow the next person to go up. It was also beyond my financial means.

Much later in life, as a birthday present, Alan paid for me to go up in a hot air balloon. Floating over Essex waving to people below was exciting but the noise of the burner and 15 other people in the basket took away any sense of tranquility and closeness to God.

Although I will never physically fly free like the birds, when I read that verse in Isaiah my spirit soars, my hopes rise and joy fills my being. Only God can fulfil my every longing.

Say What You Mean and Mean What You Say

Extracts from a Grace +Truth blog by Jon Kuhrt on February 18, 2023. Jon Kuhrt is CEO of Hope in Action.

I like both beer and theology. Whilst I have seen plenty of problems associated with alcohol addiction, I have always appreciated the good things that beer can bring. A few drinks can give us ‘Dutch courage’ to be more real and to connect better with others. Beer *can* help us say what we mean. A key question I want to ask is this: *does theology have a similar effect?* Surely good theology *should* help us to say what we mean and mean what we say?

But let’s be honest. Are the places where Christian theology is most influential – churches, Christian organisations and theological colleges – environments hallmarked by open and assertive communication? Or are they more likely to have cultures affected by obfuscation passive aggression and unspoken frustration ?

Healthy relationships - The reason this is so important is because the health of any organisation, church, or business, sports club or any other institution, can be measured by how well people involved handle *critical conversations*. And the same principle applies within personal relationships. The health of marriages, families and friendships is dependent on how people are able to say what they mean.

The crucible of my thinking - My perspective on these issues has been forged through my years of working with people affected by homelessness.

I used to work in a large hostel in Hackney and one resident (let's call him Brian) had incredibly strong body odour. His lack of personal hygiene and reluctance to wash his clothes became a real issue. It led to snide comments from other residents and frustrations grew among those who shared the TV lounge or canteen area with him.

All the staff agreed that *something should be done* about the issue. But none of my colleagues were prepared to speak with Brian because they felt it would be too awkward and upsetting for him. They said 'How would you like it if someone told you that you stink?'

But I felt it was our *responsibility* to speak to him about it because it could lead to far more serious problems. So in the end, I did it. The conversation was difficult. Brian did get angry, embarrassed and upset. But he did take it on board and agreed a simple plan to address the issue.

Though difficult and sensitive, I believe it was right to speak truth to Brian and to sensitively challenge his behaviour. It is naïve to think that kindness and support alone help people change: being truthful and challenging are also fundamental ingredients. I believe that a commitment to saying what we mean is best rooted in a theology of grace and truth. These are the two qualities that Jesus is described by at the start of John's gospel (1:14):

"We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth"

And throughout all the gospel narratives this is shown in Jesus' encounters with those he meets and in the stories he tells.

The prodigal son is received with grace when he returns home. But this is only after he has 'come to his senses' and faced the truth about his situation. (Luke 15:11-32). Jesus speaks words of grace to the woman accused of adultery 'Neither do I condemn you'. But then speaks truth 'but go, and leave your life of sin.' (John 8:1-11).

The grace and truth of God is a dialectical thread which runs through the whole biblical narrative. Rather than provide simplistic answers, good theology helps us grapple with the tensions involved in real life.

The dynamic between grace and truth - To go deeper, grace and truth are not simply contrasting qualities. They mutually interrelate and are part of each other. Acceptance and kindness is often the best prerequisite to speak truthfully. This is why counsellors speak of the importance of having 'unconditional positive regard' towards their clients. Empathy and understanding is the basis on which truth can be explored so that people can find lasting healing and help. Speaking more personally, I have found the blend of grace and truth also profoundly relevant to helping family members who have struggled with addictions, being a parent and maintaining a healthy marriage.

Spirituality and reality - It is a cheap form of grace that avoids the truth. Good theology should equip us to love others in more costly ways. And of course, a costly love this is the example Jesus has given us. A love made up of both grace *and* truth. Good *spirituality* help us deal with *reality*. So let's strive to say what we mean and mean what we say.

Food Hygiene Courses - Fenella and Heather

We are about to purchase Food Hygiene courses. These are completed online but we can arrange for you to do it at The Centre if you don't have the facilities at home. **This will be funded by the Church.**

Most people only need Level 1 i.e. for serving in the Coffee Bar, but if you are preparing food and cooking, you need Level 2.

If you would like to take advantage of this, please contact Wendy McWhirr details are in Church suite or the Office 01376 500958 or info@withamurc.org.uk



A Rocha UK's Easy Eco Tips - Audrey Kennedy

MARCH

Celebrate Spring! Make sure you're giving yourself quality time enjoying creation: smelling the blossom, tapping catkins, copying bird song, finding a footprint or identifying spring flowers with the Pl@ntNet app. Nature can boost our happiness so take time to observe nature in your gardens, on your balconies, and in your local green spaces.



APRIL

Fit more active travel into your day and daily routine. As the weather warms up, it's worth considering what journeys can be made by walking or cycling. Could you get off a stop early to walk the rest of your journey, take a relaxing stroll home, or hop on a bike and enjoy a cycle friendly route? If you prefer exploring outdoors on foot, find out if there's a local Ramblers group.



March 2023 Our Shopping List

Urgently Needed:

Tinned Tomatoes
Sponge Puddings
Tinned Rice Pudding
Tinned Fruit
Instant Mash

To Maintain Our Stocks:

Tinned Vegetables
Rice (500g)
Jam
Instant Snack (Pot
Noodle etc)
Long Life Juice
Long Life Milk
Coffee
Sugar
Squash
Nappies Size 4, 5 and 6

We follow the Food Standards Agency standards. We can only accept donations of unopened and undamaged goods well within their "use by" date. Items that do not meet these requirements cannot be used and your donation may be wasted.

www.braintreearea.foodbank.org.uk
info@braintreearea.foodbank.org.uk

Registered Charity in England & Wales (1148782)





World Day of Prayer 2023

**March 3rd 1.30pm
at Holy Family & All Saints Church Guithavon
Street**

The World Day of Prayer is a global ecumenical movement led by Christian women who welcome you to join in prayer and action for peace and justice.

This year's theme is:

I Have Heard About Your Faith

Based on Ephesians 1:15-19, the letter sent to a faith community to express gratitude. Paul gave thanks to God for the Ephesians living out their love and faith, and prayed that they could see these three truths: the hope to which God has called the disciples, the riches of God's glorious inheritance among the saints, and the immeasurable greatness of God's power.

The artist, Hui-Wen HSAIO, used several motifs that highlight Taiwan's best-known features to express how the Christian faith brings peace and a new vision to Taiwan.

The women in the painting are sitting by a stream, praying silently and looking up into the dark. Despite the uncertainty of the path ahead, they know that the salvation of Christ has come.

The Mikado pheasant and the Black-faced Spoonbill, two endangered species, are both of unique significance to the Taiwanese people. Their distinctiveness symbolize characteristics of the Taiwanese people-- confidence and perseverance in times of difficulty.

The green grass and Phalaenopsis (Butterfly) orchids stand out against the dark background. They are the pride of Taiwan, which has a worldwide reputation as the "Kingdom of Orchids." Green grass represents the Taiwanese as simple, confident, strong and under God's care.

Perfection Is The Enemy of Action - Naomi Claxton

Lorna spoke some words during a recent sermon which struck a chord with me. God doesn't ask us to BE the best, he asks us to DO our best.

I definitely have perfectionist tendencies, and I am well aware that this can lead me to not doing something at all, or finding something very stressful to do because I can't find a way to do it perfectly...it brings to mind the saying 'small things done are better than great things planned'.

It can be hard to know where to start when there is a lot to be done, and to trust that our small contributions make a difference. This feels particularly true when we are talking about climate change and being eco-friendly. The problems facing us are huge, and some of them need legislation led change on a global level to completely solve them.

In the face of that knowledge it can be easy to slip into despondency or ennui...to feel that maybe our actions on an individual level are not enough. God shows us time and time again that we are strong when we are together, that prayer is powerful, and together we can make big changes.

Together our voices and choices can make a difference. We know that God changes lives, and that he is 'for us, not against us' as the song goes. He is a creator God who could have designed the world so that at the end of the day the light just went out, and with the dawn it just came on again. Instead he gave us the beauty and hope of sunrises in the morning and sunsets in the evening. He gave us a beautiful world, and He wants us to enjoy it.

Over the coming year I am going to be exploring easy ways I can make small changes to help me be the best steward that I can be of this beautiful world God has given us, and sharing here in the hope that you will join me too.

We have so much collective wisdom in our church, and I would be so grateful if you would share it. Please let me know your best tips for make-do-and-mending, green living, recycling, upcycling, being green and eco-friendly...however you think of it, whatever you call it, I would love to try out and share your ideas so that we can find new ways of living and caring for God's world that we love in.

Prayer

Lord,
You know our confidence can fail us
We can feel we are imposters
Failing to run the race before us.

We give thanks for those who stretch their hand out to us
Who help us keep things in perspective
Who remind us why we're even trying.

May we too hold out our hands
Hold the Christ-light for our neighbour
And speak the peace they long to hear.

Amen

(From URC Daily Devotions 22nd February - Adapted from Brother, sister
let me serve you - Richard Gillard)

Amazing Aiden's surgery - With love The Mitchell 4

On January 21st Aiden went through what we hope will be a life changing surgery. He had a procedure called Selective Dorsal Rhizotomy (known as SDR for short). Over the years Aiden's legs have become increasingly tight caused by the spasticity in his muscles, which means he finds weight bearing and stepping very challenging along with lots of pain.

The surgery involved exposing the nerves in the spinal cord and identifying the ones which hold spasticity before they are cut. The hope is that his legs will become much looser and allow him to develop his under used muscles through an intensive and extensive physio therapy programme for the next 12 months.

We are now 5 weeks post surgery, the surgery itself went smoothly, Aiden was then an inpatient for a week. This had many ups and downs, it was agonising to see Aiden so upset and having to take so many medicines and be in discomfort but also rewarding to have him indicate his legs didn't hurt any more.

After a week we were discharged to a local London hotel for 2 weeks. We then returned twice daily for physiotherapy. We knew Aiden would lose skills following the surgery, again it was very hard to see what he now struggled with but he, as always was determined to work as hard as he could.

We finally came home after 3 weeks and his progress has been good, he is now back in the hands of his wonderful local physios who are putting him through his paces. There is a strict protocol he has to follow with 3-5 physio sessions per week for the next 6 months.

We are also heading back to Napa in April which we hope will also bring some new skills and stronger muscles.

We thank you for your continued support and ask for your positivity and prayers for Aiden along with his wonderful physiotherapists to help guide and support Aiden through his new journey.



Provided by Jean Moody Great Totham URC
Written by Rev Dr Peter Stevenson - Stamford URC

The whole of March this year encompasses Lent, a period in the Church that prepares for the Passion of Christ. It started in February on Ash Wednesday 22nd and will finish on Maundy Thursday, April 6th, just in time for the new tax year. The more observant and mathematical will calculate that this covers a period of 46 days and yet it represents the shorter 40-day wilderness experience of Jesus after his baptism when he underwent temptations. The six Sundays in this period are Sabbath days – days of rest, feasting, and joy where Christians celebrate and worship Jesus Christ. Because of this, Sundays aren't considered days of abstinence and fasting during Lent.

Lent is an important period of reflection, growth, and new beginnings in the Christian calendar. Christians use this special time to show their devotion to their faith, draw closer to God, and prepare for Easter. The word 'Lent' comes from the Anglo-Saxon word 'Lenten', which means springtime – lengthened days.

The three main things people focus on during Lent are prayer, fasting and giving, or charity. Prayer during Lent focuses on our need for God's forgiveness. It's also about repenting (turning away from our sins) and receiving God's mercy and love. Fasting, or giving something up, is a very common practice during Lent. That time can also be replaced with more time connecting with God. Giving money or doing something good for others is a way to respond to God's grace, generosity and love.

One thing you might consider this year is to say thank you for anything that you receive one day that you would like to receive the next day. This could include waking each day, meals that sustain the body, activities and people that preserve the mind or experiences that lift the spirit. Should you decide to deny yourself a pleasure why not replace it with the pleasure of giving

something to another. Coffee shop users, how about buying a drink for the next customer that walks in and foregoing your own pleasure. There are many ways to travel through lent, whether a person of faith or not, in reflecting on what make life worthwhile and a privilege.

Enjoy your journey this year, every blessing.

Great Totham URC in the beautiful Spring sunshine - Jean Moody

You are always invited to join us in our Sunday morning worship.

Take the opportunity to meet up with us.

It would be lovely to welcome you.



Great Totham URC March Services - Sue Bowyer

Sunday 5th Cyril Clarke

Sunday 12th. Ian Hardie

Sunday 19th Sarah Wilson (Mother's Day)

Sunday 26th. Trevor Andrews

Services begin at 10-30.

You'll find us in Chapel Rd , Gt.Totham North , Cm9 8da.

Our next Coffee morning is at 10 am on Saturday March 11th.

Tomatoes and Herbs - Julie Harris

You may have noticed, not only is the price of herbs going up, but also tomatoes...which appear to be in short supply.



I will be growing herbs and tomatoes and selling them at Church, funds going to the Church. If you want to grow your own at home, I would be very happy to let you have seeds and a pit and compost, for a donation...I cannot stress enough how much we need to become more self sufficient, where possible, it saves the use of plastic packaging and it gives pleasure growing your own produce as well as it being tastier than shop bought produce.

Tomatoes in particular have huge health benefits...and help in the prevention of many ailments, they are classed as a super food, last year I grew about 6 tomato plants and the crop was so abundant it lasted all summer.

Please come and chat with me and get involved, I am really happy to help.I will be growing a variety of tomatoes and I can give advice on how to harvest the seeds for next year....

Growing your own is so much fun and it may become a necessity...you know where I am, come and have a chat about growing your own....over and out, just off to the greenhouse...

Christine Huggett - 15th January 1948 - 30th November 2022

A service of Thanksgiving for the life of Christine was held at our church on 30th January. Christine kindly provided an article for the June 2021 magazine entitled Meet the Huggetts and it is fitting to reproduce.

Meet the Huggetts - Christine Huggett

Bob twisted our arms to write this article and bless him, he delivers us the magazine every month, so we couldn't refuse. So here goes.

We met on a blind date. He was early and I was late because I didn't want to go - but sixteen months later we were married, by my ex-boyfriend, but that's another story!: we have recently celebrated our Golden wedding. I had been at Kelvedon Congregational Church since a baby. At sixteen I was their youngest ever church member and at 21 an Elder, choir member and later Church Secretary.

After our marriage we were both Elders, full time creche and Junior Church Leaders, etc. It was a small church with a small Eldership. Eventually after 30 years, it became impossible for us, as a trio of Elders always voted as one. Older members were not being listened to and we realised we had to leave for our sake and our children.

The week after we came to Witham URC, over 40 years ago, my parents joined us and were very happy here worshipping until illness and old age prevented them. Between us I think that we've done most of the roles in the church, Meeting Point, the shop, Friday Fellowship, JFC, minibus, etc. Bill has been an Elder but I chose not to.

We enjoyed the experience of rebuilding the Sanctuary, with Bill spending many hours, with dear Alistair Campbell, under the floorboards re-wiring the church.

When I suffered a major breakdown it was our church family who immediately came to our help. They gave us financial and physical support until Bill was able to return to work and then created a rota of carers for me until I recovered.

The children were two and six when we came and loved it from the start.

Later Ben volunteered for Fellowship Afloat where he met his wife, Jenny, a veterinary nurse. He has his own business now as a Marine Surveyor. They are active members of Meadgate Chelmsford. Sarah loved all the children's and youth activities of the church, especially the FURY group.

She met her husband, Roger at uni and they married here. Roger was a teacher and is now a full time church worker for Vineyard Southend and Sarah is a Senior Community Palliative Care O.T. Both were christened, there being no alternative at the time, but have since received adult baptism and Rachel, our eldest grandchild, was baptised in the sea at Southend. We are blessed that our grandchildren Rachel (20), Jonathan (17), Heath (7) (our next is due in August) have been brought up in the Christian faith.

Witham URC has always been seen as very much a family church and as such there is a widespread of age groups, all of which are welcome.

We have always loved the mixture of traditional hymns and modern songs and I find I can worship more through music than prayer and meditation. Our faith is the central part of our lives and we are missing our church family so much. Not being on line or owning smart 'phones and not being silver surfers, we have felt very cut off during lockdown. We've had no means of taking part in the major decisions being made at the moment.

We pray for the day when we all will be together again, and as a family of all ages, gaining wisdom, growth, challenge and respect for each other in our walk with God.

Minister	Minister	Lorna Bantock	571757
Children and Youth Pastor	Mrs	Viv Sollis	500958
Associate Children and Youth Pastor	Ms	Tracey Eagling	500958
Centre Manager	Mrs	Ana Martin	500958
Children & Youth Elder	Mr	Gavin McCall	
Church Secretaries (also Elders)	Mr Mrs	Tony Deighton and Muriel Heppinstall	518866
Discipleship Elder	Mr	David Wellings	
Mission and Growth Elders	Mrs Mr	Fenella Hardie Ian Hunt	
Pastoral Elder	Mrs	Sarah Wellings	
Property Elder	Mr	Billy Kennedy	
Church Treasurer (also Elder)	Mr	Ian Hardie	
Worship Elder	Mr	Keith Meredith	
Centre Director	Mrs	Fenella Hardie	
Kitchen Manager	Mrs	Heather March	500958
Community Cafe Pastoral co-ordinator	Mrs	Eve Murfitt	
Prayer Chain Co-ordinator	Mrs	Rosemary Stinson	516602
Pastoral Team Co-ordinator	Mrs	Ruth Blackett	07546 838825
Magazine Editors		Jo and Bob Stibbards	bjstibbards@gmail.com