



The Work of God
in This Place

CHELMSFORD METHODIST CIRCUIT SEPTEMBER 2023

*A contribution from each of our churches
to share with us their
'Work of God ' during the past year.*

The **Methodist** Church 

BROOMFIELD METHODIST CHURCH

Work of God at Broomfield Eco Church

'The Tools With A Mission' scheme was very successful, and we are still collecting and storing equipment and bibles for this charity as part of our Eco mission. We have also been recycling unwanted electrical equipment and plastic plant pots. We are still collecting these items and are happy for any of the churches in the circuit to bring such materials to Broomfield, or indeed to contact us for details of TWAM, "Tools with a Mission," to support in your own churches.

Messy Church crafts are now sourced using, as far as possible recycled /eco-friendly materials and we have moved to using eco-friendly cleaning materials.

- At Christmas we entered the village Xmas Tree event with our Eco tree made from an old pallet and decorated with craft work reflecting the things we have been doing as part of our Eco mission. Everyone was impressed and we came first thanks to the imagination of Hilary and her helpers. Later in the year we attended an Eco event hosted by the village hall to spread the word of how we are living out being an Eco Church. We are very encouraged by the opportunities this form of outreach affords.



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Church Charity for 2022-3

Our Toilet Twinning Charity has proved very successful and we were able to twin all six of our church toilets by Christmas, and a number of our church congregation also twinned their own toilets as well as giving a twinned toilet as a gift to friends and family at Christmas.



Hilary, as our eco warrior, then encouraged us to look outside our church with the aim of making Broomfield a toilet twinned village by the end of August 2023. I am delighted to say we have achieved this with the church gifting toilets to the local café, the pub and a whole toilet block to the primary school. Other organisations in the village have raised money to twin their own toilets in the village hall and the British Legion and our friends at St Mary's have also twinned their toilets. The events we have been invited to attend in the village have enabled us not only to raise money for this venture but to raise awareness as well.

We also raised money for Tear Fund by participating in the annual Quiz Night in November. A good time was had by all who attended and we intend to support it again this year so do look out for the details. We would love to welcome a team from all the circuit churches and this year the quiz will be in **October**.

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Messy Church

We have 10 or more families who are regulars at the Monday afternoon sessions where adults and children alike enjoy listening to bible stories, singing songs and making things to remind them of the theme of the day.



In addition, as a form of outreach, we supported a Halloween Event at the village hall by providing craft activities which focused on Light as an antidote to the usual Halloween themes. Later in May 23 we manned a tent at the village Coronation Celebration and here we were able to promote the values of Messy church and continued to raise awareness of the need for Toilet Twinning.



CHRIST CHURCH BRAINTREE

Christ Church, Braintree.

Last Christmas, people from our church decided to go **Carol Singing** around our local streets; and instead of asking for donations we knocked on doors and gave a gift to the residents. This seemed to be well received and we saw a few new faces at our Christmas Services.

During the year we decided to relaunch our Home Groups as Life Groups with a church-wide campaign based on the Bible Society **Bible Course**. This saw two new Life Groups added to our others and an increased number of people involved. We intend 2024 to be a year of focusing on Prayer, using Pete Greig's course material to explore this subject throughout the church family – including our families and young people.

In February we launched a new mission around Valentine's Day called '**URLoved**'. We had a meal together and then the women had a 'Pamper Session' whilst the men shared together after a talk from our friend Simon Pinchbeck. Simon spoke about his time in the Metropolitan Police Force, followed by being drawn into a life of crime and eventually becoming a Christian.

We intend to hold our second 'URLoved' mission in February 2024 when we will be welcoming a member of 'Tough Talk' to share their take on living as a follower of Jesus in society today.

For those struggling with their mental health we ran **Kintsugi Hope** earlier in the year. The sessions covered a wide range of topics which so many people have struggled with especially after the Pandemic years.

We ran a new **Membership Pathway** over four evenings and were delighted to welcome new people into the Christ Church family. This was then followed up by a **Discipleship Pathway** which ran over five evenings, which encouraged people to go deeper in their faith journey. We are currently developing our **Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts Pathway** for the Autumn which will look at helping people learn how to use their gifts and abilities in the life of the church.

For parents and grandparents, we ran '**Left to their own Devices**' (Care for the Family) session. This looked at ways of keeping children safe when they are online. We had a small group but some helpful learning and discussion.

We were delighted to receive some funding from The United Reformed Church to employ a part-time **Family-link worker** for three years. We recognize that there are many families using the Church building during the week who do not connect with us as a church family. We appointed a former teacher, Linda Hendry, from the congregation who has been working on this project since Easter. She has been working with these families and planning lots of different ways to form connections. We have held a Family Summer Holiday Club; several family fun sessions; and more exciting plans are being developed.

We have also restarted **Parade Services** for our Uniformed Groups which we know will take time to increase numbers but look forward to having the groups join us on these occasions.

Our teenagers have once again been to the '**Dreaming the Impossible**' Summer camp in Staffordshire and have returned with their faith fired-up. We are so grateful to the leaders who organize this trip every year and our congregation who support them throughout the year in their fundraising for the trip.

Finally, we are training a team to run **The Bereavement Journey**, a course for anyone who has lost someone either recently or a while ago. These sessions will encourage people to talk about their experience and find support and assistance in working on the grief they are experiencing.

David Sebley

CHRIST CHURCH COGGESHALL

We continue to worship using a mixture of traditional and more contemporary styles, on Sunday afternoons, in our monthly Prayer Hour and our bi-monthly Saturday worship evenings.

Thursday coffee morning and toddler group have a core of regular attendees and great relationships and conversations take place at both. And we are building on other contacts we have with our wider community, both those who regularly use our building and those we are just getting to know.



Our stall at the Community Festival, a tombola, a prayer tree and a chance to chat to local people.

Two of the prayer points at our Good Friday Prayer Space event.



Kathryn Scherer

GT NOTLEY

We are celebrating our 25th Anniversary this year and have 54 members. We celebrated with a Celebration Weekend in June, with a Friday evening concert, a Saturday Family Fun Day and a Celebration Sunday Service.

We have several activities taking place regularly, including:-

Two weekly coffee mornings, which are supported by a walking group, together with the Ministers after prayers on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Crafty Cuppa is a fun, craft group meeting on Thursday mornings for coffee, whilst making craft items.

Snackanory meets once a week, during the term-time, for pre-school children and their carers. This is a very successful group with an average of 18-20 children attending each week.

Foodbank Distribution Centre. We are one of the distribution centres for the Braintree Area Foodbank and give food every Tuesday morning to those in need.

Junior Church runs twice a month during the term and we have a Young People and Families Worker who keeps these sessions fun and engaging for the children who attend.

Ladies Oasis is held once a month for ladies to meet, relax and chat.

Café & Chat meets once a month for coffee/tea, home-made cake and a chat, including a general knowledge quiz and a wordsearch, which are fun to do. In September/October we will start to produce Link to Hope Christmas shoeboxes, to be sent abroad to those in need.

Purely Prayer is held once a month on a Friday evening, to increase the prayer life of the congregation.

A new Bible Study group has recently begun twice a month on a Tuesday evening and is well-attended.

Youth Drop-In for Year 7 and above meet once a month during the term-time on a Friday evening. They have an hour of free play, then come together for a group activity. Numbers are increasing which is good to see.

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A new monthly Solo Parenting group has also begun for solo parents, to give them support, swap tips and share problems.

Community Events have included a Pumpkin Trail and All Hallows Event, which was a huge success. At Easter, around 40 children took part in an Easter Trail and there was also a Story Trail following in the steps of the two men on the Emmaus Road with Jesus. At the Easter Messy Church, 35 children attended. A Messy Church afternoon was also held in August.

A new Music Group has recently been formed to lead our singing at our services and we are grateful to our pianist who has recently joined our congregation.

Finally, in September we will have a **Prayer Weekend** including a Gift Day for general funds. We are partially funding a Benefice Administrator to work for us and our sister churches, All Saints, Rayne and St. Peter's & St. Paul's, Black Notley. We will also need a part-time caretaker in the future.

As our church continues to grow, we thank God for the dedication and service of our Congregation.

Ann Waters

HALL STREET

It certainly hasn't been an easy year in Hall Street Methodist Church.

The oldest Methodist Church in the circuit it has really stood the test of time over the years facing so many difficulties and problems. At the beginning of 2023 we had the loss of the very dear Peter Batey, a man that not only kept Hall Street ticking along, but so many other things as well and at his farewell service so many came to pay their respects. A very special time.

We are very grateful for many things but especially the time and effort from senior steward Jerry Kavanagh. Wonderful blessed pianist Katie Marsh as well as support from Mark, our minister, and preachers and others for their kindness. We are a very blessed and together congregation very much helped and supported by Nigel and Karen Murrell.

Now we must see with God's leading and guiding what the future brings. We say as a body of His people "Thy Will Be Done." So be it.

Mike Shelbourne

HALSTEAD

At Halstead, we were so pleased when we were able to return to worship in church together. We realise that we are situated at a distance from other churches in the circuit, and we are very grateful to those local preachers who feel able to travel out to lead worship here.

Over the past months, we have welcomed several new people to come and worship with us regularly. We encourage involvement in worship, and we are thrilled that one of our teenagers is now playing our wonderful historic organ at some services.

Most people stay for refreshments and conversation after the service, so much so that we have had to extend the size of our tables!

We continue to support the local Foodbank, to use various recycling opportunities, and have representatives at town events whenever possible.

We have some challenges ahead of us relating to Halstead being an old building and the need to finance repairs.

Rev Sue King

HATFIELD PEVEREL

Our early Sunday morning services continue to be lively & thought provoking, varying in format and content so keeping our worship fresh and inspiring.

Last December we were very pleased to have been joined again by our village Rainbows and Brownies and their families at our **Christmas Carol Service**, a very joyous occasion. As well as jubilant carol singing the children sang their own delightful version of the 12 days of Christmas and were rewarded (as were the adults) by experiencing the fun of some Christian magic, courtesy of Eddie. Many stayed and enjoyed the craft activities, refreshments and socializing after the service.

For several months we have had the pleasure of 2 **Ukrainian families** worshipping with us. Then a short while ago, sadly for us but understandably, one family returned home to be with the husband who had found new employment in Ukraine. Recently, however another family has arrived in the village and are now also enjoying our services. Hopefully feeling comfortable in a safe space after their traumatic experience, having been living in the Dnipro River area where the damn had been blown up.

Throughout 2023, we have continued with:-

- * Our twice monthly, well attended **Bible study meetings**, where thoughtful discussions are led inspiringly by Jeff.

- * **Monday Lunch** club during term time at the village Junior School.

Rev. Barry and Ria give a lot of thought and prayer into providing suitable interactive and varied sessions, to teach the children all about God's love. The children respond enthusiastically and enjoy watching bible based videos, acting out stories, or helping each other with craftwork to take home. We are looking forward to the start of the new term when we hope the children will remember the fun they had and bring along new friends.

- * **Stitch 2 Enrich group**, attended by village friends and church members. While enjoying stitching and chatting, we are currently decorating cloth bags for "United in Kind". A charity which works to combat loneliness by spreading kindness and helping people to connect with their local community. The bags will be filled with toiletries to be given to clients.

- * **Our WhatsApp group** is very lively, giving us the opportunity to keep in touch any time, to share --- good or sad news, encouragement, prayers and support for one another.

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* **Our Face book page** is constantly up-dated,(for which we thank Anna for her dedication to this task), with news about the contents of our services and activities, including many photos and thoughts for the day.

Looking Forward with positivity and concentrating locally to spread God's word ;- several members are now participating in the Myriad programme as we try to find new ways to be visible in our community and connect with our neighbours.

Aileen French

MALDON

In MMC we are seeking ways to make God's vision for His church our mission. Jesus announced God's vision when he said *"The time has come, The Kingdom of God is at hand"* (Mark 1:15) and then after His Resurrection Jesus for 40 days taught His Disciples one thing *"About the Kingdom of God"* (Acts 1:3). We believe that our mission is *'to seek to make the Kingdom of God visible in Maldon'*.

Here below are some of the ways we are doing this.

By teaching the word of God through Bible study, prayer and fellowship.

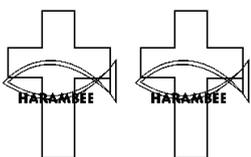
We finished the last of the book of Exodus towards the end of 2022. It was quite a journey through which we learned much about who God is. He is the One who keeps his promises and even when his children fail, he remains faithful. Nathan burnt the Exodus story on a piece of wood which is on display in the church.

This year we have experienced the letters to the seven churches in Revelations. We used the videos from Our Daily Bread. It guided us to the very sight of each of the various churches. It gave us a deep understanding of each church's individual struggle, their failings and their achievements. We were encouraged to hold on to our faith to the very end.

May God bless us as we continue to study the Word of God, seeking to know him more deeply.

Ria Allen

Also, through interaction with the community around us.



Harambée.

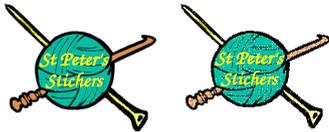
Following a near three-year break due to the pandemic, we restarted Harambée this year.

Of necessity we are starting small. In June we sang a couple of numbers at Great Notley Church in their talent evening. Then a couple of weeks later we held a "Come and Sing Joseph" as a way of letting the world know that we are back.

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Currently we are rehearsing for a concert, "In The Spirit Of Christmas." This is a short concert of Christmas music and two or three sketches which we will perform in the afternoon and evening of 2nd December. Booking details to follow.

We are praying that from small beginning we can grow and return Harambée to the very public face of the church we were in the past.



St. Peter's Stitches Knit-N-Natter group.

The group was started in the cafe at St. Peter's Hospital Maldon early last year. In June of this year the cafe had to close due to health issues for the lady who ran it. After talking to our letting's secretary, Mark and Moira, two of our church members, invited the group to move to the church where they meet every Thursday morning. Initially we were meeting in the small hall but we have outgrown that and now meet in the Elsie Finch Hall.

Not all who come knit. Some just come to natter. We have a couple of vulnerable people attend just for somewhere to go. Also, two or three of the ladies who used to volunteer at the cafe come and deal with the teas and coffees for us.

Everyone puts a pound in the pot and when we have enough, we give Julie Taylor the cash for another bleed control pack. She raises funds for these in memory of her grandson. Liam, who was knifed to death in an unprovoked attack at the age of 19.

We thank the Lord who has made it possible for us to give this service to the community.

"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'" Matthew 25:40

Mark Grundy

C25 – ministry to the 20-year-olds

We started a ministry to the 20 something adults. As we discovered that they are no longer into the pub and club scene. But really need a place that they can fellowship together.

We have made a space for them. The fellowship includes food, discussion and adult craft. At the present moment this is on pause. However, we will be restarting in November.

Nathan, Barry and Ria

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Mums and Tots

Meet every Monday during the school term for children from new born to 4 years of age. We have various ride on toys, dolls, prams, slide on the outside of the chairs where the mums, dads, grandparents sit. There is a corner for reading, puzzles and drawing. In the middle of the adult's ring there are other toys for the children to play with.

There are refreshments for the children and the adults, action songs, a lots of fellowship with adults.

Christine Foster

Keyring - ministry to the elderly

We meet every Tuesday afternoon from September to December and then from February to July. Previously this was a ladies group but we now include men as well. We hope everyone will feel welcome.

Each meeting has a different theme but we always begin with a short act of worship and end with refreshments.

We have talked about places we have visited recently or in the past, music and books we have enjoyed. How we celebrated Harvest, Christmas, Easter and the Coronation of King Charles 111. Once a month all members share a thought, hymn or poem which is meaningful for them.

We share friendship and fellowship together in a safe place.

Maureen Crilley

Wesley Guild--- alternate Wednesday afternoons

Once a year we have a planning meeting where members make suggestions of who to ask to speak to us or what they can offer themselves and a programme is drawn up. We try to include themes of Worship, Education, Social and Charity throughout the year which makes for variety and shared interests. Each meeting has a short act of worship and ends with refreshments. **Maureen Crilley**

Vintage Fair

Maldon town have a vintage fair every year towards the end of November. The High Street is closed to traffic and shops extend their shopping hours and pop-up stalls fill the high street. MMC open their doors that evening with a time of carol signing, mince pies and coffee/tea.

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This November the carol singing was led by folk from Hatfield Peverel, The Cole-Njie singers from Witham and others from MMC. People come in throughout the time for the fair and participate in the singing and of course enjoy the mince pies and hot coffee/tea

Christian Aid

At the beginning of Christian Aid Week, and following a successful collection in the High Street, we were happy to host the annual service at Maldon Methodist Church. Maureen Crilley led the worship during which we were pleased to hear that the drought resistant 'pigeon pea' has resulted in the people of Malawi benefitting from an increase in crops and income.

The Maldon Open Gardens afternoon at the end of June, and on one of the hottest afternoons of the summer, saw many folk able to enjoy a time of relaxation and refreshment as they wandered around many of the beautiful gardens that were open that day. The event raised £1,000 for Christians Aid.

Next week Maldon Methodist is open Friday 8th September 12 – 2pm for a Christian Aid homemade soup lunch followed by homemade cakes etc. All for £5.00.

Pam Shrimpton

Connecting with the new housing developments around Maldon

Every house in the new housing developments around Maldon and Heybridge will have a personal visit. This is a combined effort of the CTiM. It is about holding out a "welcome hand to Maldon" A gift bag will be offered to each home. This will contain sweets, a candle and a leaflet advertising the whereabouts of each church and the various activities and support that the churches can offer, no matter what stage of life the new Maldonites are in. Throughout the planning, members of the various churches have been coming together to pray. The coming together to pray will continue throughout the visitation to the new housing estates.

Tony Shrimpton

MOULSHAM LODGE

It has been a joy to recommence our services without any restrictions, after the previous couple of years of disruption, with numbers worshipping now much in line with 2019. Looking back much has been achieved with limited resources and we are grateful for all the support given over the year under review.

We started our Methodist New Year with our Covenant Service, followed closely on its heels with a combined Harvest and Brigade service. It was heartwarming to hear the full combined Brigade and MLMC Band back together again. It was equally so to hear of the work of Baby Basics and to be able to provide donations, although, as with many other charities, it is sad that they have to exist at all.

The start of Advent was marked by a joint service with St Luke's hosted by ourselves, with St Luke's hosting an afternoon of crafting, refreshments and leading into their new version of a Carol Service the following week. The crafting was well attended and it was a shame that more did not stay to the Carols after, but it was a good afternoon in which both churches could reach out to others in the community.

We held our annual gift service in early December with a focus on the Foodbank, led by Sue Johnson. A substantial quantity of food was collected and delivered to the Chelmsford Branch of the Trussell Trust Foodbank.

Carols featured again at our combined Carol Service with the Zimbabwean church led by Mark. We sang in different languages but the tunes remained the same. This was followed by a bring and share lunch, which everyone seemed to enjoy.

During the lead up to Christmas, Glenda Griffin led us in a joint Moulsham and St Luke's Advent Study, which was well attended. Hopefully we can persuade Glenda to do the same in December 2023.

Another feature of this period was a crafting afternoon aimed at decorating the scrabble board in the hallway with characters and scenes from the nativity. Much chat, drawing, colouring, painting and sticking was shared by a good number including some from outside of church. Meanwhile the Art and Craft Group was pursuing its own decoration with pictures, again depicting the Nativity, which it displayed for all to see on the Main Hall walls.

The culmination of Christmas reflections and celebrations was a light hearted Christmas Morning Family Service led by Jim Lowe, who had us all in stitches with his Black Country humour. Again we welcomed some new faces.

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The New Year saw us working together again with St Luke's with another combined service hosted by them in February.

Throughout November, December and January the church hosted a "Warm Thursday" from Coffee Club through to Art Group in the afternoon with a number of the congregation volunteering as greeters and hosts. This was an offering to our community during a period of extreme energy cost increases. It was disappointing not to receive any new guests but this, it appeared, was in line with a number of other similar ventures, which, despite the publicity, had attracted only a few, if any, through their doors.

March was church anniversary month. This year our birthday celebrations were a lunch entitled "bangers and mash bash". The main course was provided by the church and the desserts were brought along on the day. Needless to say there was plenty to go round. Worship on Sunday was a combined Parade/Anniversary Service led by Deacon Ramona.

Many of our fellowship worked really hard to make our services leading up to and including Easter such a blessing to all who attended. Many talents all came together for the work of the Kingdom. I doubt we shall ever forget the Palm Sunday parade from the shops with our brothers and sisters from the Zimbabwean church fellowship singing and whooping their way to the building for worship led by Deacon Ramona.

A number of us joined the Good Friday procession of witness either along the way or in the City Centre and again after worship we were treated to witness from the guys of Tough Talk. Ramona led a time of reflection in the afternoon and on Easter Sunday we joined together in a service of Holy Communion to celebrate this very special day.

Early summer saw much time devoted to the issue of finances within the church and the ability to pay the assessment in full for 2023 – 2024, having been forced to reduce our contribution to Circuit quite substantially for the current period. A group representing the Church Council has been attending the Four Churches in Chelmsford discussions on where we see Methodism in Chelmsford in the future, our financial deliberations being included as one input to the way ahead for us all. Much has yet to be done and we place our trust in the Lord to guide us and show us how we may use our resources wisely in the future.

Whilst many groups close for the summer holiday period, our volunteer team running the weekly Coffee Club decided to keep running, a decision welcomed by those who attend. We are ever grateful to the dedication of this and the Friendship Club teams for the hard work put into making both a success.

As the church year drew to a close we were again hosted for a worship service by St Luke's and we look forward to working ever closer with our friends "over the road" in 2023/2024.

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It seems wholly appropriate that our last service of the church year will be a Songs of Praise, which also falls on the fourth Sunday this year. Consequently we are hosting all of the Chelmsford City Churches for what we anticipate to be a good time of worship and hopefully some exuberant as well as reflective singing.

We are thankful for the past year and all it contained. We pray for the year ahead, with all it may bring, that we may be guided to go and do what we are called to, not in our power but in that of the Holy Spirit.

Bob Griffin

SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS

In September we had a joint Harvest Service with all of Barry's Churches. It was held in Witham and the congregation included folks from Witham, Maldon, Hatfield Peverel and ourselves. We enjoyed a shared lunch afterwards. Barry felt it was very successful and we will be repeating this in September 23.

In September we also had our usual joint Harvest service with our Anglican friends. Donations - financial and practical - were made to CHESS in Chelmsford.

"Open the book" project run by a group of members in the Church is now well established in the town and regularly goes into 2 local schools. This is a wonderful outreach project to the younger members of our community.

Memory worship is led monthly by the Methodist Church community in Windle Court - our local Care Home. Val Carter leads the worship and as an Anna Chaplain is able to support the community in a special way.

Monthly Creative Church with Arts and Crafts activities for local children and their parents continues on the first Saturday of the month in the local Church School hall. In July there was an outdoor picnic and games instead of meeting in the hall.

We had a joint service of Remembrance in November with our Anglican friends led by a Methodist local Preacher.

We had a variety of Christmas services and Advent Courses during the Christmas season.

We had a tree of Joy in Church during the Festive season to collect toys and Gifts for children who would not usually receive a gift at Christmas. It was very well supported and people gave generously.

We had an Outdoor Town Carol Service in the Town Square. All denominations from the town took part. It was unfortunate that it was a particularly cold Winters night!

There was a United Covenant Service with Maldon, Witham, Hatfield Peverel and ourselves on January 15th followed by a shared lunch.

A vigil for Ukraine *organised* by the Christian Council took place in the town on 25th February. Each Church had a specific half hour slot. It was a cold and wet day but nothing compared to the suffering of the people in Ukraine as we remembered them in prayer on their first anniversary of the Invasion from Russia.

World Day of Prayer organised by the Methodists in South Woodham Ferrers took place on March 3rd. The service was well attended and many people commented on the lovely atmosphere in Church as we joined in the celebrations with the Women of Taiwan. We all enjoyed fellowship and delicious refreshments after the service!

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A special service to commission Val Carter as Anna Chaplain for South Woodham Ferrers took place on March 5th. It was a lovely service with many people attending to support Val.

We enjoyed an ecumenical Lent Course on the prayers of Jesus led by our Anglican Minister, Rev Carol Ball. Carol retired after Easter and we miss her very much and all the support she gave to the Methodist Church. We had a joint service followed by shared lunch on her last Sunday (April 23rd)

The Anglican Church is currently without a minister and we are working together to share some services. They are invited to our Monthly Communion services on the first Sunday of the Month.

Our witness on Good Friday was an open air worship and drama at the Bandstand in our town square. We felt this was an effective way to witness our Faith in the town.

In May The Methodist Church had an hourly slot at a stall run by the combined churches in South Woodham Ferrers at an event celebrating the King's Coronation. It was good to see the way the community participated in the crafts and stories that we presented and they had lots of fun doing the arts and crafts that all had biblical themes.

In June we had an extra Church Council meeting to explore the Church's vision, mission and the way forward. Our Anglican friends were invited.

We have registered as an Eco Church and are working towards obtaining an Eco Church award.

Our regular activities include:

- Foodbank
- Weekly prayer group
- House group/bible study every fortnight.
- Retiring collections for disaster funds as appropriate.
- Action for Children Collecting boxes

Tricia Tutin (Senior Steward) 30.7.23

ST AUGUSTINES

At St Augustine's we have continued to have a busy and fruitful year 22/23.

We have some joint ventures with our Catholic brothers and sisters who support the Little Free Pantry and helped us celebrate the Kings Coronation with a shared meal and games. We are also planning celebrations for this year as it is the 40th birthday of our church. This began with a joint coach trip to Canterbury and the planning of a service in October.

Messy Church is an important fixture during each half term and this year we focused on the elements – Water, Fire, Earth and Wind. It is an opportunity for outreach and cementing friendships with parents and children. Some children and their Parents come along to 'Team Rainbow', [Sunday School], and a few Baptisms have been held.

The 'Springfield Wombles', pick up many bags of litter one evening each week, weather permitting!

Fundraising has been eventful with a 'Danceathon' in February, a Christmas Bazaar and Strawberry Cream Tea. Some of the proceeds going to church funds and some to chosen charities, the latest being for a Bleed Kit, which could help save someone's life.

Some of us joined in useful courses led by the Diocese about 'Planning a Service', 'Reading in Church' and 'Leading Intercessions'. We also joined in a thought provoking Zoom course, 'Spiritual Living in a Secular World' based on the book of Daniel.

We are sad to say Farewell to Ramona from the Methodist circuit who always presented us with food for thought during her sermons. We wish her God's guidance and blessings on her future.

With God's assistance, we have many new projects planned for this coming year. We wish you all well in your plans and service to God.

Pam Scammell

TRINITY

It was good to welcome Mark back from his Sabbatical as we began our new year. Our Awayday on 1st October at Roxwell Village Hall was well attended, and following discussions several new initiatives were put in place.

We at Trinity were delighted to welcome those from the 4 Chelmsford churches, to the first of our United services on 27th November - the 1st Sunday in Advent. It was heartwarming to join together with over 100 from our Church family on this special day.

Our Christmas services went ahead as planned for the first time in 2 years including the Big Sing on 18th December, and Pyjama service on 24th December. Members of Trinity joined Mark and Sheridan at The Black Bull in Rainsford Road on 22nd December for Christmas Carols and songs. It was a joyous evening when regular customers joined us as we sang to the marvellous piano playing of Dave Cooke.

House groups are meeting face to face once more after the past 2 years when Zoom was the only option. We do have one group who include Zoom in their meetings to enable two members to join them who have moved to Wales. Our Pastoral Visitors are once again able to visit, which is so very important for those who are housebound or find it difficult to get out.

We continue with our twice monthly Coffee & Friends on Friday mornings, and monthly Tea@Two on Thursday afternoons. Both are held in the Link and all are welcome.

Our Sunday Fellowship Lunch followed by a short service of Communion is held monthly and is very well attended especially by those who find it difficult to get to the 9.30 Sunday Services.

Trinity Music & Drama chose 'Chitty, Chitty, Bang Bang' for their show at the Civic Theatre this year, and this lovely, family show was a great hit with those who attended.

In early June we were treated to a wonderful evening when The Daisy Bowlers, comprising Heather, our student minister, her husband Dave & their friend Debbie, played for us and raised a considerable sum of money for the Chelmsford Circuit Refugee Fund.

Heather has been with us for 3 years and has been a true blessing to Trinity, and during the morning service on 9th July we said farewell to her as she leaves to take up her new post in the Southend Circuit. Heather will be very much missed, and we pray that God's Blessing will be upon her as she begins this new phase of her life. There were more goodbyes during our United service on 23rd July, when once again we wished God's blessing upon Rev. Brain and Deacon Ramona, as they move to pastures new - Brain to his new stationing in Glasgow and Ramona as she spends time with her family in Antigua.

It has been a busy year but one in which we give thanks for some normality after the challenges of the Covid years.

Carol Kellingray

WITHAM

'Work of God' Booklet – Witham

We give thanks to God for our Church Family here at Witham and during the last year we have been pleased to welcome some new people.

Our Church Sunday Club for children continues twice monthly and we are grateful for the children who attend so faithfully. It is a joy to see them grow and ask increasingly searching questions about the Bible and matters of faith.

We were delighted to host the other Churches in Barry's section at our Harvest Festival Service which was followed by a 'Bring and Share' meal and it was also a pleasure to share in a united section Covenant service, again followed by another delicious spread!

More recently we have been having a twice monthly Bible Study led by Ria and Barry. We have been looking at the Book of Revelation and the letters to the seven churches. This has been very enlightening and our understanding has been helped by the video introduction to each session by Pastor Joe Stowell. He introduced each letter whilst standing in the archaeological ruins of the cities to which they were written and this historical context has certainly helped our understanding of the letters.

We are grateful that our Church continues to be used as the Foodbank distribution point. This meets every week without fail due to the enormous dedication of its' volunteers and the numbers of those using Foodbank seems to be steadily increasing.

We are also inviting Foodbank clients into our Foyer to enjoy a hot drink and a chat whilst they are waiting. We have found that this initiative works better when the weather is inclement.

'Coffee Pot' our Church craft group and drop in continues to be popular and they have made lovely items for Christmas, Mother's Day to distribute to the congregation as well as making beautiful Chinese lanterns for our World Day of Prayer Service.

The number of community groups using our premises seems to ebb and flow making long term financial planning difficult. We hope that our Church website will prove a useful tool in not only advertising our Church activities but also our premises.

Jenny Jarvis

Femi Cole-Njie Continued/...

On the 23rd of October, the eve of United Nations Day, 'Femi led an "All Nations" service. Members of the congregation were invited, a few weeks earlier, to come to the service in national dress. Prayers were said and the Bible passages read in different languages, there were also songs from different nationalities. The children led in a flag parade. The entire atmosphere gave a foretaste of heaven as recorded in Revelation 7: 9

Members of the congregation shared in a Maundy Thursday Meal and Service two years after it was planned because of the Covid 19 pandemic. We were joined by the Rev'd Michael Child of the Baptist Church who shared in the leadership of the Service. We had a variety of vegetable soups with homemade bread rolls, as a sign of our commitment to 'Going Green for Lent'. On Easter Day following the worship Service, the congregation processed outside the doors of the Church with the beautifully decorated cross singing, "Thine be the glory!"

We are praying and seeking God's guidance for the start of a children's ministry in Witham, to complement The Sunday Club and to reach out to children (the next generation) in the community. In December a Children's Christmas Party was organised to serve as an introduction to the initiative.

An animated version of the Nativity, 'Jesus to the Rescue' (from HOPE Together) was presented. During Holy Week, we ran a Three-Day Holiday Club for children aged 3-12. A Roots Resource was used and the daily programme included icebreakers/games, songs, memory verses, interactive Bible stories, snacks and crafts. Some parents joined in and were grateful for the sessions. Two Saturday Club sessions were held in July and a Holiday Club is planned for the third week in August.

Rev Femi Cole Njie