

Stepping Stones

Newsletter for

EPPING UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

ONGAR UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

November 2022



The
**United
Reformed
Church**

Epping URC News

Toddler Group

We celebrated toddler group's 20th Anniversary in October with a special morning which included delicious birthday cake. It has been lovely to get to know so many families over the years and I sometimes see mums in the town who often talk about their happy memories of coming to the group. We privileged to have been involved in this wonderful missional branch of our church family, and praising God for his accompaniment.

Toilet Twinning

The church has decided to participate in the toilet twinning scheme, by which its toilets are twinned with a new toilet in the developing world, providing sanitary and safe facilities and we will be twinning all five of our toilets. We heard about the scheme and how it helps those who benefit from it during a recent service. World toilet day is a UN-designated day on 19 November to raise awareness of the sanitation crisis and push for action to change things for the 1.7 billion people worldwide who still do not have a safe toilet. You can also twin your toilet at home or workplace or even twin a family or friends toilet as a Christmas present! Read more here: <https://www.toilettwinning.org/> and <https://www.worldtoiletday.info/>.



Churches Together in Epping & District

There will be a remembrance Sunday (13th November) service at St Johns Church, Epping at 3pm following the wreath laying at the war memorial.

Coffee Mornings 10am-12pm

Saturday 5th November; donations for Toilet Twinning

Saturday 3rd December

Services for November 11am

6th Michael Beccato-Fischer

13th Joan Smith *Remembrance Sunday*

20th Gillian Amphlett

27th Lindsey Brown *1st Sunday in Advent*

Looking ahead to Christmas we will be having a Carol & nativity service on the 18th December and there will be a service in our church on Christmas Day.

Happy birthday this month to Ada who will be 2!

Ongar URC News

The closure of both Epping and North Weald Methodist Churches should make us all reflect on our worship and the size of our congregations now on a Sunday. In the URC General Assembly Reports there was a suggestion that the URC should follow the Methodist practice of considering the future of small churches with a small, elderly membership. I found this quite disturbing and even more so when I read in October's edition of 'Reform' that Brentwood URC is considering its future in light of an elderly and decreasing congregation.

We need to look around us on a Sunday in church and look at those worshipping with us. We all need to seriously consider how long we too can continue to worship as a congregation on a Sunday and whether there is any other day, time or form of worship we could try to attract people into our church. The new URC Children initiative which seeks to bring under the umbrella of the local church all those children attending other groups at the church but not necessarily Sunday worship, gives us some hope for the future and we all need to reflect on what each one of us could contribute to extend the work of the church beyond Sunday worship.

Joan

Twinkles

Following on from my comments above, we have been asked in Twinkles if we could consider opening on a further day in the week. We regretfully had to say that this would not be possible due to the lack of helpers and our other commitments. It is a pity that we have to limit the work we do, especially as some opening or Holiday Club during the school holidays would really be appreciated by so many of those attending. Please devote some of your prayer time to pray for the work of Twinkles and for solutions to emerge to the problems we encounter.

The final total of money raised from our Coffee Morning for Macmillan Cancer Support was £90. Our next charity morning will be on Thursday, 17th November, when we shall be supporting Children in Need. If anyone would like to make a donation towards this or contribute a raffle prize this would be very welcome. We always make a donation towards the morning of £10 from our funds and then add to this with our entrance money, as well as the sale of cakes and a raffle.

We will be finishing the term on Thursday, 15th December, with a short time of worship in the church, followed by a party for the children with a small gift to take home. Of course, the adults too will have their treat of mince pies and mulled wine (if they're not driving!).

Joan

Quiz Night

The quiz night on 21st October was a great success. These biannual events started to raise money for our hall modernisation, now we don't need to do that. We can offer the profit to good causes.

The Ongar Twinning Association is raising money to entertain our French visitors from our twin town of Cerizay next Spring. We were able to give them £450.00 after deducting expenses.

The evening is always popular & well attended and this year was no exception. Particularly enjoyed after the Covid interruption. Martyn is an excellent quizmaster, getting the right balance of questions, we are grateful to him for organising this for us.

We've had a very nice message of thanks from the Chairman of the Twinning Association.

We would like send birthday wishes to those having a birthday in November.

Services in November 11.00

6th Joan Smith *Holy Communion*

13th Elizabeth Stockdale *Remembrance Sunday (10:45)*

20th Revd Ernie Bosse

27th Revd John Buxton *1st Sunday in Advent*

North Weald Methodist Church Closing Service

The closing service for North Weald Methodist took place on 23rd October and although it was a sad occasion it was good to see the Church full of old friends as well as people from Haebea. The service was led by Rev. Blair Kirkby with contributions from Michael Beccato Fischer and readings by Chris and Gill. Cynthia read about the history of the Church fellowship interspersed with some of her own memories. There was an interesting display of old photographs of the Church activities and visitors also looked for their children's names on the baptismal roll. Most people stayed on afterwards and enjoyed the refreshments and a chat with old friends.

Gillian Green

I had the privilege of leading the last Sunday morning worship at the church on 16th October. It was a difficult service to prepare, trying to balance the sorrow we felt at the impending closure with hope for the future. We started the service with a hymn, new to me and to the congregation, 'As we gather in your presence now' (StF609) which talks

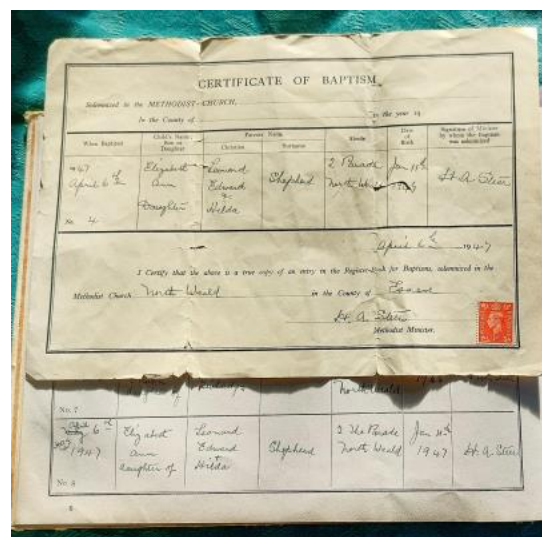
about worshipping the Lord wherever we are and whoever we are with, even if we are alone. To my embarrassment, I was unable to sing it fully as my voice was a little croaky and I in fact lost it completely the following day! However, everyone put in a good effort at singing it, with especial thanks to Rosemary for playing it through so it became familiar to everyone.

As part of the service I read a message from Brian and Margaret Herring, setting out the welcome they received as 'strangers' to the Church on first moving into the area, then singing the hymn Brian had referred to 'There's a light upon the mountains' (StF188). The service finished with 'One more step along the world I go' (StF476) which I felt appropriate as they take a step into the unknown future. It was with sadness that we finished the service but with hope for the future, wherever they may go to worship.

The following Sunday was their final service of thanksgiving for their life and witness, which was more formal due to the necessary conventions having to be followed. Again, Brian Herring had sent Blair a prayer for the service, which I found very moving and I am sure the prayers and thoughts of Brian and Margaret were with us at both services. It was good to share fellowship for one last time with everyone and to catch up with one person who used to regularly worship with us at Ongar who I had not seen for many years.

I would like to thank all the members of North Weald for the warm welcome I have always had when preaching there and for their acceptance of me at their Church Council meetings as the HAEBEA Executive representative. I have always enjoyed preaching there even with the need to 'do the double' at Ongar, leaving them in good time to brave the 414 and cyclists! I pray that God will be with you wherever you worship and keep you growing in faith.

Joan Smith



Herts and Essex Border Ecumenical Area

Christmas Market at Hoddesdon Methodist Church



Saturday 12th November
10.00 am - 2.00 pm

Hoddesdon Methodist Church
Middlefield Road, Hoddesdon, EN11 9DE

Entrance - 20p

Jigsaws, Beauty & Bath, Bric-a-brac,
Christmas Cards, Notebooks, Christmas paper
etc, Homemade produce, Gardening stall
Second-hand Books, Tombola, Chocolate stall,
Hamper Raffle, Refreshments



Epping Chorus

Epping Chorus (formerly Epping Church Choirs Association) resumed rehearsals in September but several choir members have left for various reasons and new members are needed, particularly sopranos and tenors. Rehearsals are on Friday evenings at 8pm at the Epping Catholic Church Hall. The choir is currently rehearsing the Armed Man for the performance on the 21st January 2023 and will soon start rehearsing for the Christmas concert on Friday 16th December at St Johns Church, Epping. If you, or anyone you know is interested in joining the choir, please contact Simon Winters, Choir director who is also the director of music at St Johns Church swintersmusic@aol.com .

Warm Places in Epping & Ongar

- **Epping Forest District Council Offices:** Monday and Tuesday 10am-4pm, refreshments and activities available
- **Epping Library:** Monday to Friday 9am-5:30pm & Saturday 9am-5pm
- **Epping Sports Centre:** Daily 11am-2pm, vending machine refreshments available



- **North Weald Library:** Tuesday 9am-1pm, Thursday 2pm-5:30pm & Saturday 9am-5pm
- **St James' Church Ongar:** Monday 1pm-5pm, Thursday 9am-12pm, Refreshments and Activities available
- **Ongar Library:** Tuesday 9am-1pm, Wednesday 9am-7pm, Friday 9am-5:30pm & Saturday 9am-5pm.
- **Ongar Sports Centre:** 11am-2pm Daily, vending machine refreshments available



All households this year will receive a One-off £400 energy grant. This payment is for everyone despite income and need.

Do you need this grant or would you like to donate it to support a vulnerable person / family?

As the cold weather sets in, there are thousands of households in Epping Forest that are living in fuel poverty. Voluntary Action Epping Forest have been operating a Winter Warmth scheme for a number of years where we assist agency referred individuals and families who are vulnerable and in need, to keep warm during the winter.

VAEF are asking for your support to provide as much help to vulnerable people as possible. Together we could make a huge difference to the lives of many this winter as, while this energy grant will help ease the strain for a lot of households, it won't cover the full cost of energy price rises for many.

£25 could assist an individual with a small grocery shop

£50 could help towards a families rising fuel bill for a week

£100 could help a family with fuel and groceries for a week

£400 could help several families with their fuel & grocery costs

SCAN HERE TO DONATE:



VISIT: <https://wonderful.org/fundraisers/NgKwN>

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admin@vaef.org.uk