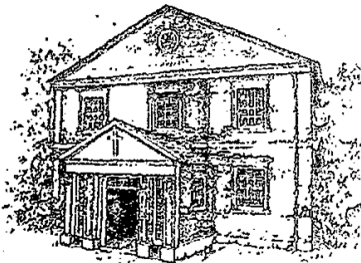
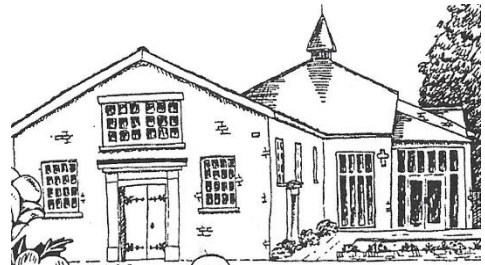


# Stepping Stones

*Newsletter for*

EPPING UNITED  
REFORMED CHURCH



ONGAR UNITED  
REFORMED CHURCH

June 2023



## **Epping URC**

### **Coffee Morning**

We raised £120 for Christian Aid week at our coffee morning in May which was a lovely morning of fellowship, cake and an enjoyable raffle!

### **Birthdays**

Happy Birthday this month to Betty, Shirley, Lesley, Sandra, Marian, Edna and Cynthia.

### **June Services all 11am**

4<sup>th</sup> Michael Beccato-Fischer

11<sup>th</sup> Revd John Buxton *Holy Communion*

18<sup>th</sup> Gillian Amphlett

25<sup>th</sup> Prayer & Praise

## **Ongar URC**

### **Annual Church Meeting**

As you will know from the weekly pewsheet this will be on Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup> June at 3.00pm and there will be a time afterwards to share in fellowship over a cup of tea and cake or biscuits.

The Annual Church Meeting gives us an opportunity to reflect on the life of the church over the past year, how things have changed and what we hope for in the future. There will be reports on the changes and the activities of groups during the year, together with time to express our hopes for the future of this church. It is a business meeting, but so much more than our usual church meetings as we come together with an opportunity to voice our worries, as well as our expectations.

Sometimes it seems to me that there is no life in this church as, like so many other churches, we seem to have emerged from the pandemic with fewer faithful attendees at Sunday worship and fewer helpers in our groups. Things may have got back to a 'new normal' but there is less energy in our service to God, both in worship and mission. Admittedly we are all three years older but that should not mean that we stop or restrict our service to God, as the less we do the fewer members we will have. Jesus gave us the Great Commission to go out and make disciples – have we let Him down since the pandemic? There is a great emphasis in HAEBEA and Synod at the moment on empowering churches to fulfil their mission but, even if we were to be allocated a worker to help us, would we be prepared to play our part in supporting them or would we leave all the work to them?

I hope that you, like me, will consider these things and that we can have a Spirit-led Annual Meeting where we can find the will to go forward with energy and hope.

**Joan**

### **Twinkles**

We are coming up to the school summer holidays now and inevitably we shall lose many of our children to nurseries and school. September will be a sad time but also one of hope as we are always surprised by the number of children who begin to come to our group at that time.

From conversations we have had on a Thursday morning with carers, mothers and grandparents, it is obvious that our group is vital to so many as an opportunity to socialise, to share concerns about raising their children, and for the children to acquire social skills as well as to develop their language skills. It is vital, too, for the mental health of all who attend as feelings of isolation can lead to mental problems. At one time the health visitors used to visit after a birth, but now they limit much of this to Zoom calls and, according to one mother, are completely unaware of what groups there are in this town for mothers to meet with others and for their children to play. Please, if you have any young children or babies living near you, let them know about Twinkles or direct them to the church website or Twinkles Facebook page.

**Joan**

### **Celebration Service**

Welcoming Bishop's Stortford Circuit as they join HAEBEA

St. Andrew's Methodist Church, The Stow, Harlow CM20 3AF

Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> September 4.00pm

Refreshments will be served after the Service.

The Preacher will be Rev. David Chapman, Chairman of the District, who has preached in this Church. Unfortunately I am away on the residential lay preachers' course that weekend but I hope that we can be represented on this very special occasion.

**Joan**

### **Open House**

Open House continues to be a popular place for friends to meet up on a Wednesday. Our church members enjoy each others company and its nice to welcome people from the wider community. We always celebrate birthdays with a birthday cake and everyone is happy to bring a cake with them to share when it is their birthday.

We still have our Sales Table where we raise funds for a specific Charity each month.

We would like to wish "Happy Birthday" to those having a birthday during June.

### **Church Service dates for June all at 11.00**

4<sup>th</sup> Joan Smith *Holy Communion*  
11<sup>th</sup> Michael Beccato-Fischer  
18<sup>th</sup> Revd Stuart Veitch (With Arthur Revels)  
25<sup>th</sup> Joan Smith

## Herts & Essex Border Ecumenical Area

### Hatfield Heath United Reformed Church



**Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> June - 10 am to 12 noon**

£1 entry fee and this gives you a hot drink and biscuit

### Hoddesdon Methodist Church

**Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> June: 10am – 2pm**



**3 Books or DVD's for £1; Commemorative Stamps**

**Tea & Coffee Available**

## Holiday Club at St Andrew's

### The Restoration Station Holiday Club!!

**25<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup>  
July**

**10 am  
to  
12:15 pm**



Crafts,  
Bible stories,  
puppets,  
games,  
and snacks  
for children  
from  
Reception to  
Year 6

**St Andrew's Methodist Church Harlow  
The Stow CM20 3AF**

St Andrew's Methodist Church in Harlow are holding their popular Holiday Club once again this year. Suitable for Children from Reception to Year 6, 'The Restoration Station' Holiday will run between 25th – 28th July, 10am – 12.15pm. Activities will include crafts, Bible stories, puppets, game and snacks. The cost is £ 1.00 per child per morning to be paid at the beginning of each session. Places are limited so register now and close on 8th July. For more information phone Revd. Blair: 07913476934

## URC Eastern Synod

**SAVE THE DATE!!!**

**FAITH IN ACTION DAY AT EPPING URC**

**SATURDAY 30<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER**

Epping URC will be hosting the Synod's Faith in Action day which will be a day of workshops, talks and youth activities on social justice topics from a variety of speakers. All are welcome. More details to be announced- speak to Jeremy for more information.



## **Sanctuary Sunday**

**Sanctuary Sunday is the final Sunday in Refugee Week. This year it takes place on Sunday 25th June.**



### A Prayer for Refugees

Holy God,

You are our refuge and our strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble. Thank you for your unconditional love and your unfailing hospitality.

On this Sanctuary Sunday, we rededicate ourselves to embody your compassion and commit to intentionally demonstrating neighbourly love to your children in need of sanctuary.

Teach us what it looks like to be the perfect host, to build bigger tables in our communities and to welcome and include those who are different from us.

We pray for all those who have been forced to flee their homes. Lord, keep them safe. Give them courage, resilience, and tangible hope. Guide their feet to people and places who will honour them and uphold their dignity.

Work in and through all those with the power to address the situations from which people have fled, whether war, famine, persecution, or climate change. Help us to understand what part we can play in alleviating the suffering of our neighbours.

In the face of hostility towards refugees and people seeking asylum, help us to model kindness, listening and compassion towards all human beings, even those with whom we disagree.

Keep us strong in our resolve to resist policies and structures that work against your Kingdom of compassion.

God, begin your work of restoration and hope in us.

Amen.

## **Environment Sunday (4<sup>th</sup> June)- Hope in the face of the Climate Crisis**

A few weeks ago, an estimated more than 60,000 people attended [‘The Big One’](#), a climate protest organised by Extinction Rebellion (XR). Using different tactics from previous XR protests, the weekend brought together 200 organisations. Representatives from the URC formed part of a faiths service held on the Friday, and the subsequent march to Westminster, demonstrating our continued concern for creation.

And yet again, it feels like when the protestors went home there was little change within the walls of the Palace of Westminster. Protests can cause hassle to politicians and members of the general public but, still, the climate crisis does not seem to be the top of our government’s agenda. Despite the critical need for structural change in order to



protect vulnerable people and nations from the harshest effects of the climate crisis, we have seen little change.

The outlook feels bleak. But, as Christians, we know that there is hope:

*'Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.'* (Revelation 21.1)

Whilst I don't pretend to have all the answers for what John is describing in Revelation, this passage does speak of the centrality of the renewal of creation to God's plan for the world. Just as Jesus came to *'bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners'* (Isaiah 61: 1), so too does God's plan involve the healing and restoration of the planet.

The need to care for and restore creation is central to our role as stewards of God's creation. God invites us to join in with this journey. We can pray for international cooperation, for scientists finding solutions to the climate crisis. We can attend protests and marches, write to our MPs and speak truth to power. Our churches can join the [Eco Church](#) scheme.

As we approach Environment Sunday this year, how could you or your community exhibit the hope of the gospel in the face of the climate crisis?

Article from the Joint Public Issues Team: <https://jpit.uk/environment-sunday-hope-in-the-face-of-climate-crisis>