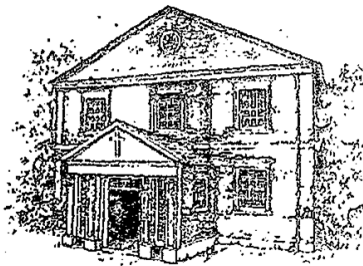
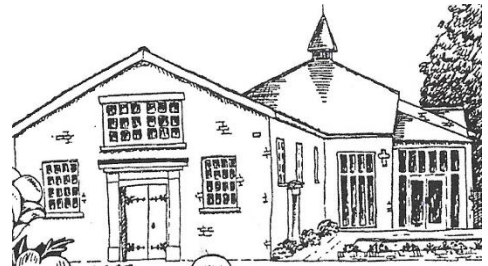


Stepping Stones

Newsletter for

EPPING UNITED
REFORMED CHURCH



ONGAR UNITED
REFORMED CHURCH

July and August 2023



Epping URC

Shelia Forsyth

Shelia Forsyth sadly passed away at beginning of June; her funeral will be held on Friday 14th July at 3pm at The Epping Forest Burial Park, North Weald. The family have requested no flowers, however if you wish to give a donation please donate to the Alzheimer's Society or St Clare Hospice. Shelia was a much loved and active member of Epping Methodist Church. Please remember her husband Les and family in your prayers at this sad time.

Toddler Group

Toddler Group will finish for the summer holidays at the beginning of July where instead of our usual healthy eating snack time we shall all be indulging in cake, jelly and ice cream! This will be followed by a celebration in the sanctuary with a Bible story and praise; we will also be saying goodbye to our four year olds who will be starting school in September. We are thankful to God for the happy times we have enjoyed this year at toddler group.

July and August Services All 11am

July

2nd Fred Arthur

9th John Ellis

16th Revd Kathryn Taylor *Holy Communion*

23rd Efua Koi-Larbi

30th Prayer & Praise

August

6th Elizabeth Stockdale

13th Revd Kathryn Taylor *Holy Communion*

20th Fred Arthur

27th Alan Whymark

During our communion service on the 16th July, Javad will be baptised and Lesley will be joining our church in membership. Jeremy will be ordained as an elder of the church on the 13th August.

Birthdays

Happy birthday to Claire, Lindsey and Tim who all celebrate birthdays in July & August.

Ongar URC

For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them” (Matthew 18: v20). This verse is particularly relevant to me this month as I heard that 24th July was the final day of for Crundale Chapel, near Haverfordwest in Pembrokeshire, South Wales. It was built in 1837, rebuilt in 1872 and again in 1882 and modified in 1930. It was this chapel of the United Reformed Church where my friend, Kate, was married and that sent her to study as a lay preacher. I met her at Westminster College during the weekends our small group were together. She is now continuing her studies for the ministry at Northern College.

On 8th July we shall also see the closure of Brentwood United Reformed Church after 147 years worshipping and witnessing in Brentwood, being formerly New Road Congregational Church. All are invited to the final service there at 2.30pm. Their numbers had dwindled until they were a few, predominantly elderly, members and it was with reluctance, after exploring other options and the will of God, that they decided to close.

So where does that leave us? We are very few elderly members, faithful in our worship at this church, but, as God so often reminds us, the church must take second place to our faithful worship lest we find that we are actually worshipping the buildings! It may be that in a few years we too will have to consider closure with there being fewer other options for worship in the area. Both Epping Methodist and North Weald Methodist have closed their doors, as well as Trinity URC in Harlow. Epping URC have welcomed those from the Methodist churches and some ‘newbies’ lately, but we do not seem to attract others through our doors. The transport links in and around Ongar on a Sunday are admittedly poor and people from, say, Brentwood would find it difficult to come to us. We all need though to consider why people don’t come through our doors and what or how we need to change if we are to survive as a worshipping fellowship.

In HAEBEA there are funds available for mission, but any workers employed or projects undertaken need to be sustainable by the local church beyond the time span of the project. We are all asked to consider where we think help is needed in our churches. Due to the baptisms we have had lately, I have considered that perhaps we could employ once again a children and families’ worker, who could occasionally follow up on families who come to us for marriage or baptism, as well as assisting with Twinkles and helping us to extend our work with children, particularly during the school holidays. Please devote prayer to this as it could be some way of injecting new life into the church, even if it isn’t on Sunday mornings.

We were also approached by an Indian Orthodox Christian Church with a view to sharing our premises initially once a month. I met the lady from Harlow who was seeking a church and showed her round the church, but unfortunately our layout was not suitable for their services as there is little we can do with the interior due to its listings. I was, however, able to introduce her to Rev. Stewart Gibbs and they are currently exploring the use of either St. Mary’s or St. James’, which are more open and thus suitable for their

particular type of worship. Both David and I support their endeavours and hope, once they are settled, to attend their worship, even if I won't understand a word of it!

God sent them to us and led them on – I pray that he will do the same to lead us into the future, exploring other links we could make and other ways we could share our premises with other churches.

Twinkles

We continue to welcome new carers and children, even though we are now in the run-down to the summer holidays. As I have mentioned, we did hope to perhaps run an experimental morning for children in the holidays, where we could have activities and then finish with a picnic lunch together at about 12.15pm. This was not possible due firstly to the difficulty of organising our space to safely accommodate different ages and the lack of helpers. We shall continue to explore extending the work of Twinkles and ask for your prayers for our group.

Joan

Church Balcony

Before the Hall redevelopment we were advised by the architect that we should not store so much in the balcony due to the weight affecting the structural stability of the balcony. Although the amount stored there has reduced (and is no longer visible from the platform), it does not mean that the balcony is any safer and it also presents a fire risk. If there were to be structural damage to the balcony it would mean that we would be presented with an astronomical bill for repairs, even if no-one seated beneath it were injured, as it is one of the features listed for its uniqueness and its historical value.

Accordingly at the last Church Meeting it was decided that everything stored there should be cleared. It would be appreciated therefore if this could be done by the end of October and everything remaining there on that date will be taken to the Council tip and disposed of.

Joan

Baptisms

As you may know, Rev. Ernie Bosse conducted a baptism of a couple's two children at our church on Saturday, 13th May, where I assisted. This proved such an enjoyable occasion that one of those attending has requested the baptism of her child. This has again been arranged with Rev. Ernie for Saturday, 29th July at 11.00am.

As this is a Coffee Morning, it would be appreciated if you could keep the door to the Hall closed and not come into the church by that door. If you would like to attend, you would be welcome.

I would also be grateful if no boxes surplus to the coffee morning sale were left in the church and other items on or around the pews were put away in the cupboards. Thank you.

Joan

We would like to wish a “Happy Birthday” to those having a birthday in July.

Services for July and August All 11am

July

2nd Brenda Hall

9th Revd Kathryn Taylor *Holy Communion*

16th Penny Bloom

23rd Alan Whymark

30th Ruzive Mhiribidi

August

6th Revd Kathryn Taylor *Holy Communion*

13th Michael Dyer

20th Prayer & Praise

27th Revd John Buxton

Herts & Essex Border Ecumenical Area

'Strawberry Tea'

Leaside Church & Community Centre

Sunday 9th July, 2 - 5 pm



Celebration Service

Welcoming Bishop's Stortford Circuit
as they join HAEBEA

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

Saturday 9th September
4.00pm



The Preacher is Rev David Chapman, Chairman of the District
Refreshments will be served after the Service

Singers & Musicians Needed! For the Celebration Service

On Saturday 9th September at 4.00 pm,
at St Andrew's Methodist Church
there is a special Celebration Service to welcome
Bishop's Stortford Methodist Church
and Stansted Free Church as they join HAEBEA

Would you like to be part of the Choir
or Music Group that will help lead the
worship at the Celebration Service?

Contact Michael for more information

 haebeaoffice@gmail.com  07597 109819



URC Eastern Synod

Eastern Synod Faith in Action Day



Saturday 30th September

Epping United Reformed Church.

Workshops, talks and youth activities on
social justice topics

More details soon ● All are welcome.



Eastern Synod achieves bronze eco-synod award

The Eastern Synod has become the third URC synod to achieve a bronze eco synod award.

The journey to becoming an Eco Synod began in 2020 when the synod's environmental policy was adopted, committing the synod to significantly reducing its carbon footprint. Since then, it has divested from fossil fuels, embedded environmental issues into its mission and training, including having the climate as a key part of synod events, integrated sustainability into synod grants, working to improve the carbon footprint of manse, celebrating eco achievements of churches and having regular eco updates in synod newsletters. The synod office was also awarded a silver eco church award where, for example, electric car charging points have been installed.

So far there are currently 49 churches registered with eco church in the synod of which 19 have achieved awards (including Epping URC) including Emmanuel Church in Bungay which is one of only 3 URC churches to have achieved a gold award.

The Synod said “This is a fantastic achievement and shows the synod’s commitment to safeguarding creation. It is testament to the hard work of synod staff, volunteers and all of our churches who have engaged in eco church so enthusiastically. We are now looking forward to working towards the next stage and achieving a silver award.”

Helen Stephens from A Rocha/Eco Church wrote “As the synod with the largest proportion of rural churches in the whole of the URC, this is no small achievement. There are many positives in your application, not least that the Green Issues is a core component of the Mission Committee and that ‘environmental priorities are an essential part of our mission’”

Eastern Synod Youth Event

Saturday 15th July 2:30pm-4:30pm
The Playground, Barrow, Suffolk IP29 5BE
The day is for young people aged between 10 to 18

Come and experience the 1Km assault course with 30 different obstacles including slides, nets and walls and perhaps a muddy ditch or two! More details can be found here:

OBSTACLES BSE — The Playground (theplaygrounduk.com)

Refreshments will be provided during the afternoon.

The cost for the event is £7 per person

This is a great opportunity for children and Young People from across the synod to come together in a fun and active way and to meet young people from other churches.

Please encourage

Young People to come along and have fun.

For further information please contact

Nicola Grieves

Children’s and Youth Development Officer

cydo@urceastern.org.uk

tel 07515721172

Epping Forest Foodbank

We're running extremely low of donations with the following items, if you are able to spare any donations, we would be hugely grateful.

We provide an essential and vital service across Epping Forest, providing emergency food parcels to those in crisis every week, we are seeing a significant increase in our service being used across the district.

- Cereal
- Soup
- Chopped Tomatoes
- Pasta Sauce
- Tinned Vegetables
- Tinned meat & fish
- Tinned Fruit
- Sponge Pudding
- Instant mash
- Tea & Coffee
- UHT Milk & Juice
- Toiletries
- Snacks

Eco Tips from Eco Church for the Summer



Help birds in the hot weather. Keeping your bird bath topped up with fresh water can be a life saver for our feathered friends. Get your garden birds through a heatwave when natural supplies, like worms become scarce, by putting out supplementary food- black sunflower seeds, pinhead oatmeal, soaked sultanas, raisins and currants, mealworms, waxworms and good seed mixture.

Hedgehogs also need help in the hot weather as their usual prey of slugs, snails and worms are often unavailable. Leaving out a juicy snack, such as mealworms or canned dog food can help in sustained warm weather. If you have a garden pond, ensure there's always a way for hedgehogs (and other small mammals) to climb out if they fall in.

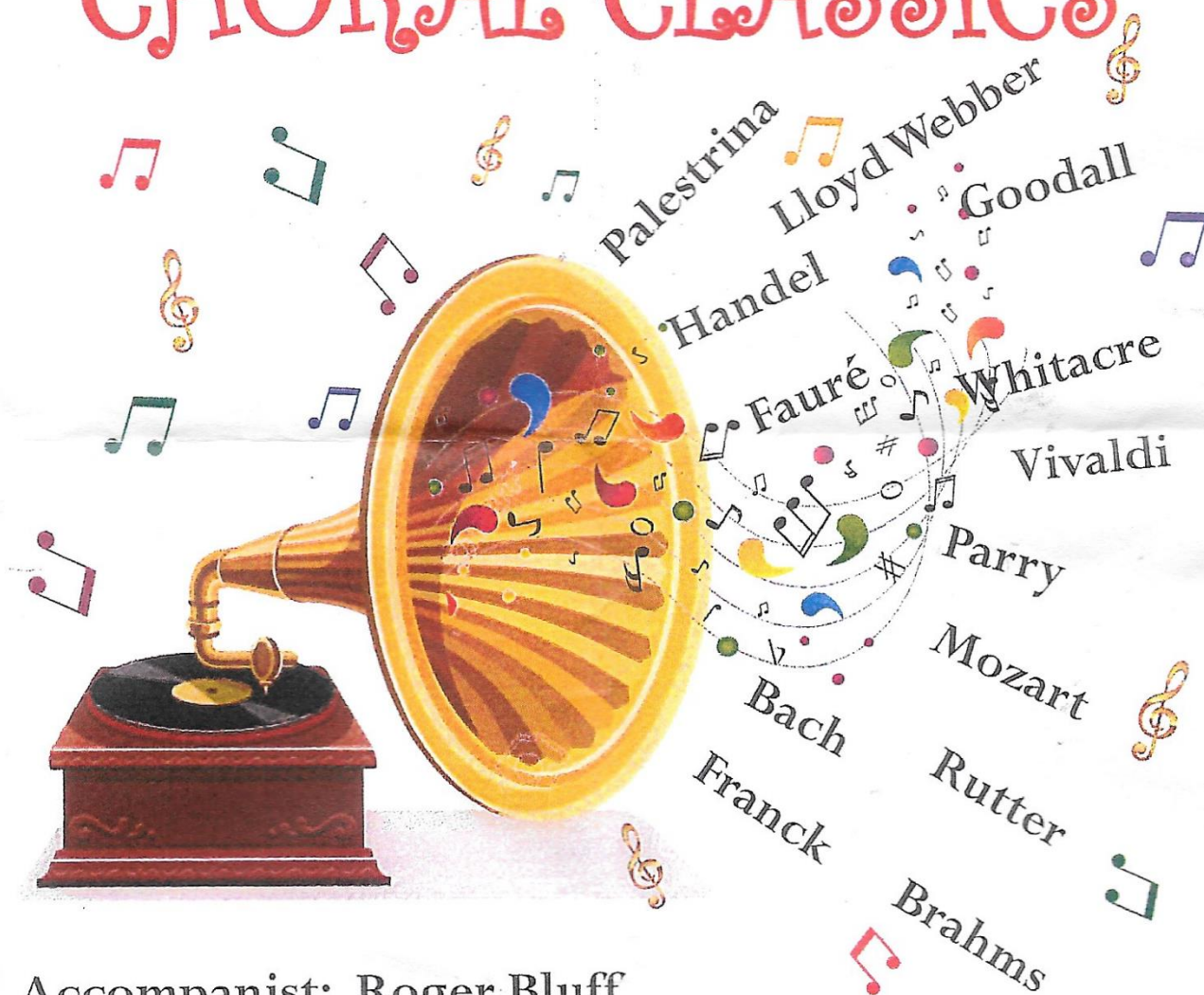
EPPING CHORUS

Musical Director: Simon Winters

Saturday 8th July 2023 at 7.30pm

St. John's Church, Epping CM16 5DN

CHORAL CLASSICS



Accompanist: Roger Bluff

Tickets all unreserved: £10 (under 18s free)

Tickets from: www.ticketsource.co.uk/epping-chorus

For programme details please visit the website: www.eppingchorus.org